



APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANITY;

OR,

THE PEOPLE'S ANTIDOTE

AGAINST

ROMANISM AND PUSEYISM.

BY THE

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AUTHOR OF

"A GUIDE FROM THE CHURCH OF ROME TO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST."

There is one God; and one Mediator between God and men, the Man CHRIST JESUS.
ONE is your Master, even CHRIST.

The BIBLE.

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PREFACE.

THE Author of the following work, does not think any apology is needed for introducing it to the public. He believes that every one who has the power, should do something for the cause of Evangelical truth and Christian liberty, at such a time as this. The labours of one man may find a welcome reception, and do efficient service, in places where those of another and an abler would scarcely be heard of. The results of learned investigation would be, in a great measure, lost to society, if they were not simplified and popularised,—divested of their cold air of abstraction, and their forbidding technicalities,—and placed in a readable language before the multitude. Political philosophers admit, that a Bentham could do little for mankind, if he were not followed by a Brougham. The habits acquired in poring over folios of ancient Divinity,—in analysing and comparing conflicting authorities,—are seldom compatible with a talent for writing and speaking, *ad populum*. Men's energies will flow more freely in the channel which custom has worn for them, than in any other. The author's have not flowed exclusively in one. He has been called not only to study the subject for himself, but, according to his ability, to render it interesting as well as instructive to the people.

It is true, that every teacher of astronomy is not obliged to read the stars with his own eyes. The independent testimonies of competent men in different parts of the world, who have used the telescope for years, and reported what they have seen in the heavens, cause all educated persons to rest satisfied in the truth of the Copernican system,—and in the existence of facts whose reasons they cannot comprehend. It is partly so in religious matters. The peasant has better evidence that the Bible is the word of God, than he has that the earth moves round the sun.

But the writer of these pages is not in the position of those excellent men, whose zeal for the principles of the Reformation, now endangered, has induced them, in the midst of pastoral duties, and other pressing engagements, to study works on the Catholic controversy, in order to guard Protestants against Puseyism. He has been familiar with that controversy from his boyhood,—and is acquainted not only with the outworks of the system, but has dwelt in its chambers of imagery. The *inner* spirit and doctrine of the Church of Rome can hardly be appreciated properly by those who only look at her from without, or read descriptions of her internal working. And yet this inner spirit so modifies external matters, and makes them sometimes so different from what they appear,—that Protestants not unfrequently miss the mark, in trying to enlighten Roman Catholics. Even when they do hit, they often strike a chord of pride or prejudice that makes the heart recoil from all further efforts.

Besides, if we wish to rescue immortal souls from a system of fatal error, so mixed with truth and so originating in truth, that it requires a delicate hand to pluck up the one without loosening the other,—we must study that system, not in books merely, but as it actually lives and works in the hearts of its victims. The confidence of the Author, therefore, in thus coming forward, is grounded chiefly on the fact, that he is no raw recruit in this warfare. He was brought up in camps—and he has been for several years engaged in actual service. He has tried his weapons, and found them proof in every species of conflict, whether wielded from the press, the pulpit, or the platform. Having learned his tactics in the field, he knows the strong and weak points of the enemy, as well as the most effective modes of assault. Yet the testimony of all parties warrants him, perhaps, in saying, that he has been enabled, through divine grace, to abstain from every thing offensive or violent in conducting the controversy. The enlightened reader will find nothing in this volume to wound good taste or Christian feeling,—nor need the most tolerant friend of truth hesitate to put it into the hands of intelligent Roman Catholics ; for no man deprecates more strongly than the Author, the acrimony with which they have been treated.

Many have expressed to the writer a wish to see a work on Romanism and Puseyism, at once comprehensive and brief—solid in argument and lively in style—mild and conciliating in its tone,—yet firm and decided in its defence of principle,—freed from the dryness, harshness, and bitterness of polemics,—clothing the skeleton form of argu-

ment with benevolent feeling,—giving to it a high moral tone, as well as a graceful bearing,—and animating the whole with the breath of evangelical life. In the brief intervals of an arduous mission, he has laboured to accomplish this object; with what success must be left to the judgment of the public. He has done the “best his circumstance allowed,”—persuaded, from the conduct of Apostles, Reformers, and Martyrs, as well as from his own experience, that *direct* efforts to enlighten Roman Catholics by the meek and Christian refutation of their errors, has ever been the duty of Protestants. This duty has long been culpably neglected! but the necessity of self-defence now renders it imperative.

His duties as a missionary, have prevented his reading several recent publications on this subject, which he would gladly have noticed. This circumstance must also be his excuse for any verbal mistakes that may have escaped in the printing. His facts, arguments, and authorities, however, may be relied on. They have often been tested in the course of his controversial labours, and he now submits them to the public, trusting that they may be found useful to Pastors, Missionaries, Scripture Readers, and others, in their efforts to ascertain or disseminate the truth as it is in JESUS.

Belfast, July 9, 1842.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

THE servant of the Lord must not *strive*, but be gentle unto all, apt to teach, patient, meekly instructing those that oppose themselves :—biting sarcasm—bitter ridicule—railing personality—unscrupulous misrepresentation—insidious sophistry, are weapons which he must not use.

The evils of an acrimonious spirit, in controversy, are incalculable. It creates the most powerful barriers against the Gospel ; lending to prejudice the bitterness of personal resentment, the strength of party feeling, and the obstinacy of wounded pride. Nothing has tended more to the distortion of truth. Two pitted antagonists fancy, in the heat of battle, that they can never contradict one another strongly enough ; trifling differences are magnified ; and, as the contest proceeds, arguments are exchanged for anathemas ; they depart from the arena, each hating the other more cordially than ever, and each several removes farther from the simplicity of Gospel theology.

The Oxford Tract writers, and some of their abettors, are certainly in earnest,—and, perhaps, really consider the prevalence of their principles essential to the safety of Christianity ; and, if their caution in feeling their way, and letting out just so much of their system as their readers are able to bear, reminds us forcibly of the policy of the Jesuits, we should not therefore infer, that they belong to that Society.

Nothing tends more powerfully to attach men to their party, than the fashion of imputing corrupt motives. It is the liability to a charge of dishonesty and selfish hypocrisy, which renders a change of creed so painful, and which induces many to suppress the convictions of their minds, even to the end of life. This barrier to truth, we should endeavour, as far as possible, to remove, instead of raising it higher by our own example.

It would be well, also, not to charge upon a system, consequences which its advocates disavow. That such consequences logically flow from it, may be true; but, then, they deny it, and should not be held responsible for what they do not profess. It is better, as Archbishop WHATELY well remarks, that a man should be esteemed a bad reasoner than a heretic. Besides, if we insist that certain pernicious principles are involved in his system, he will be more likely to embrace the errors for the sake of the system, than to reject the system on account of the errors. Hence the prudence of discriminating—of taking all the concessions we can fairly get, without pressing too closely the charge of inconsistency.

Prejudice seldom yields to direct attacks; it is only strengthened and exasperated by open hostility; it must not be stormed but sapped. Hence the propriety of avoiding an irritating discussion of *minor* differences. This is lifting up the axe to the topmost branches, which, though the most obtrusive, and crossing our way most offensively, will not be broken by the stroke, and may hurt us in the rebound: it is better to push them gently aside, and go at once to the root. When *that* yields, the branches will soon wither and fall.

It is an interesting fact, which every student of human nature must have noticed, that the most absurd prejudices are the deepest rooted—that the most indefensible dogmas are most tenaciously grasped; and the slightest touch of truth causes them to vibrate painfully to the very quick of sensibility. It is not *here*, then, that a wise man would attempt to make his first impression. It is folly to expect that honest men will

suddenly relinquish old customs. They cannot be rooted up forcibly, but must be left to die away of themselves, when deprived of the nourishment drawn from ignorance. Here every thing wearing the appearance of coercion is out of place. If our object is to do good, we must not imperiously press our arguments, nor *drive* our opponent to a mortifying conclusion. The torrent rushes over the rock without affecting its stability, while the drop that gently glides down into its interstices gradually accumulates to a column in its heart, and rends it from its basis. Such is the insensible but mighty operation of truth on the human mind! If it is not manifesting its influence outwardly, it is gathering strength within—it is waxing great, and will ultimately prevail.

The eager controversialist applies his match too soon, and wastes his ammunition on the surface. There is a loud explosion, but no execution, while the sleeping sentinels are roused to repel all further operations.

The bitterness of religious controversy is often engendered, and always exasperated, by politics. But why, it may be asked, should the church be so deeply implicated in the conflicts of the world, throwing herself, like a heathen goddess, into the tumult of the battle? Why should *her* voice be heard loudest in the deafening din, while her sacred hand grasps the sword, of which it is written, that those who use it shall perish by it?

There is no man who values the interests of truth, loves the gates of Zion, and wishes peace within her borders, and prosperity in her palaces, but must do his utmost to divorce religion from party spirit. Until this is done, Christian unity is out of the question. So long as this spirit frowns in every social circle, and protrudes its monstrous features on the very altar, there cannot be Christian fellowship. This demon must be cast out of the church, or she will never have rest, nor be “in her own right mind.” It is truly the abomination that maketh desolate.

It is surely time that something decisive should be done to

break through this tyranny that oppresses the meek, and visits with vindictive persecution, the independent expression of principle. If we continue thus to bite and devour one another, we shall be consumed one of another; and like the fore-doomed Jerusalem, our own distractions and convulsions will render us an easy prey to the common enemy.

I confess, that when I look at the signs of the times, *this* is the spot of the horizon that inspires fear. Providence is every where opening a way for the triumph of the Gospel; he is shaking the nations, and blending their kindreds and tribes together, that the salt of the earth may more readily purify the mass. But how, in her present torn and distracted state, can the church avail herself of these facilities? The prospect is bright in all directions, but the one to which the nations must look for the salvation of God. The sky over Zion is "gathering blackness," but let us hope that

"The cloud we so much dread,
Is big with mercy, and will break
In blessings on her head."

The storm which is now passing over her may purify the atmosphere, and usher in a season of tranquil prosperity.

The whole financial system of our religious establishments is a source of dissension, that must soon be dried up. It is to be feared, that, in the present temper of the times, no church, whose revenues are *imposts*, can dwell in peace with her neighbours. But a church should, as much as in her lies, live peaceably with all. She should imitate the Lord that bought her, who "though he was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich." Churches as well as individuals, should study the example of Jesus Christ, and obey his precepts, giving up cloak and coat for the sake of peace. Nothing can be more unlike Christ, than the character that stands haughtily on prerogative, and will yield nothing, lose nothing, to conciliate those who should be won and saved. Many *marks* of the true church have been reckoned by pole-

mical divines. There is one which has been little thought of, though perhaps it is the most decisive of all—*self-denial*—taking up the cross daily, and following the meek and lowly-minded Saviour. A *self-denying* church—this would be a new thing in the earth! No church, determined to abate nothing of the pride of life, and the love of money, can come into annual collision with the people on pecuniary matters, without constantly losing more and more of her spiritual influence. All things that are just are not expedient. “Better,” far better for her “is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox, and hatred therewith.”

Whether innocently or not, it is a fact, and a very serious one, that the church is now the great disturber of society—not as a preacher, but a tax-gatherer—not as the herald of peace and liberator of the captive, but as the claimant of property, and sometimes the incarcerator of the righteous. While the church and the nation are involved in litigation, so many earthly interests depending on the issue, the latter must continue to be the very focus of unhallowed strife; and so long as the contest lasts, schism must reign, but love and piety languish. All, therefore, who love the peace of Zion, and feel how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity, should labour to bring about such an arrangement as will tranquillize society, and terminate the painful luxation which now threatens it with dissolution.

But, alas, the spirit of *secular aggrandizement*, that shaped the policy of Papal Rome—that, for ages bound the mind of Europe in fetters, and deluged its fairest valleys with blood, is active in most of our Protestant Churches, more active *now* than at any time since the Reformation. In this general struggle for a respectable and commanding position in society, each party (every church is now a party) is nervously anxious about its wealth, its numbers, its political power—compared with which, I fear the real interests of the Redeemer’s kingdom are esteemed matters of but secondary moment. In a word,

as churches, they are "glorying in the flesh," perhaps, more than in the cross of Christ. At all events, it is but dimly seen and slightly felt; while objects merely sectarian, are pursued with intense interest and unflagging perseverance.

If not, whence these sad divisions, which rend the body of Christ into fragments—into members scattered abroad, and bleeding on every side? Must they not be ascribed, in a great measure, to *secular ambition*—to the caution, suspicion, coldness of heart, and contractedness of spirit—the solitary, selfish, repulsive pride, and the plotting expediency with which that spirit is ever accompanied? In proportion as religious societies gravitate towards the world, they are divided, intolerant, selfish. An ingenious writer* supposes that the temptations of Christ in the wilderness were designed to prefigure the trials which the church should have to encounter in the world. The *first* shows how Satan would, in the seasons of her deep poverty, allure her to sell her birth-right for a mess of pottage, to distrust a God who so frequently exposes his people to privation and sorrow. The *second* indicates the fanaticism, and the vain pretention to miraculous endowments, into which she was betrayed, when miracles were no longer needed. The *third*, the insatiable ambition with which she should be led to pursue the phantom of mundane glory.—*The kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them—all these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.* Has the gorgeous panorama never flitted before the mind of the church?—has she never yielded to this temptation? The kingdoms of this world and their glory, we know she has sought, and gained. But has she complied with the *condition*? Is it not natural, then, that she should be implicated in the distress and perplexity of nations; and that, when Jehovah comes to shake terribly the earth, he will "*shake the heavens also*?"

The question of church-government is one of considerable

* Rev. Dr. Hinds—Rise and Early Progress of Christianity.

difficulty. The *principles* of that established by the Apostles, are to be traced indeed in the New Testament; but ecclesiastical history does not give us information as full and authentic as we could desire, on the subject. And, accordingly, the wisest and holiest of men have, from the premises, drawn different and contradictory inferences. And, certainly, none of all their schemes of ecclesiastical polity is so *exactly* primitive or Scriptural, as to justify its advocates in insisting on its divine right. It should be remembered, too, that church government is only a means to an end.—It is designed to edify the body of Christ—to cultivate fellowship—to regulate zeal—and concentrate efforts for the conversion of the world. Now, if that which was designed to edify and unite, be employed to demolish and scatter, we must either have mistaken its principles, or, in our own pride and selfishness, grossly perverted them.

It is time, therefore, that our internal disputes should cease—that we should cast down our earthly weapons. Providence loudly calls us to man the walls of our common city, and wage a nobler war against principalities, and powers, and wicked spirits in high places. Let us seize the sword of the spirit, and put on our heavenly armour. The *Puseyites* have invested the Papal controversy with an interest such as it never possessed since the Reformation. True, it has often been degraded, and rendered almost disgusting, by the personalities and animosity of political partizans and false-hearted proselytes;—still it is a controversy, compared with whose magnitude and importance, other great questions are but trifles. It goes at once to the very foundations of our faith—searches out and reveals the most secret springs of action—strips off the manifold disguises of the pharisee—calls for the most delicate hand and the nicest discrimination in separating truth from error—establishes on an everlasting foundation the headship of CHRIST over his church—exalts the Bible as the standard of our belief—vindicates the rights of conscience, and our individual, our *imme-*

diate and *direct* responsibility to God—lays the surest basis for civil liberty—is conversant with the history of man in the most important eras of his existence—exposes to execration the enormous villanies and atrocities, the ruthless tyranny and shameless frauds of spiritual despotism, the mighty and mysterious delusions of the *man of sin*—clearing up and illuminating for mankind a highway to the cross, and making us familiar in our progress, with the greatest instances of moral heroism that ever thrilled the human mind with admiration and awe!

How can such a subject be thoroughly and honestly studied, (not to serve a temporary purpose, or to pick up a few second-hand arguments, to silence an adversary, but prosecuted as a great branch of ministerial education), without expanding and invigorating the mind? The time is coming, when ministers cannot neglect this subject, and when it must be *mastered* by all who have any claim to be considered as “masters in Israel.” The time is at hand, when we must take the Reformers for our models, instead of the feeble and superficial pulpit rhetoricians of the last age. Truth may be so spoken as to give offence; is it therefore to be suppressed?—Never! Let it be spoken *in love*, and it will not be spoken in vain.

The great questions at issue between Protestants and high churchmen regarding “CHURCH PRINCIPLES,” are the topics which arrest the multitude; which rouse the public mind from its wonted religious lethargy—agitate stagnant thought—foster intellectual independence—liberate conscience, and quicken into healthful action all the rational and moral faculties to which the word of God appeals. Oh, what a pity that the subject should have been defiled by the tongue of intolerance! Hence it has happened, that pious and liberal men are ashamed to meddle with it;—abandoning a most important work, a most imperative task to hands that are too often either unworthy or incompetent. They forget that Paul’s triumphs were victories over error—that they were won by meek but powerful discussion, that he was opposed by violence and popular outrage, as

well as by base priestly intrigue; and that an enlightened, tolerant, judicious itinerant lecturer on Romanism or Anglicanism, reminds us more strikingly of the glorious scenes in the Acts of the Apostles, than confirmations, ordinations, consecrations, or any other work which modern Catholics claim as exclusively Apostolical.

But the Church of Rome, it will be said, is changed. She is imbibing the spirit of the times, and is shaking off the customs of the dark ages. Many of her people, it is true, are doing so. But let not Protestants be deceived by appearances. It is a part of the very nature of that church to hate liberty. Her whole history proves this. She, is indeed, accommodating herself to the popular movement, in order to control it, and make it subservient to her own interests. As a *Church*, she is the foe of all reform, and ever will be; and many Protestants are unconsciously playing into her hands, because with her characteristic adroitness, she has been acting the liberal, to serve her purposes. But see how fondly she would hug the 'Tory Puseyites, clasping them with one arm, and the Spanish monks with another. Her present energetic movements are in self-defence. They should arouse Protestants, but need not alarm them. She has many tendencies of our nature in her favour, but they can no longer be mistaken for true piety; while the whole current of social progress and improvement is sapping the foundations of her system. She is active, indeed, but hers is the activity of a manufacturer on the old system, competing with the power of machinery and steam. Her spiritual tariff may avail, so long as there is prejudice to sustain it; but prejudice is yielding to knowledge in every part of the world.

The Puseyites are too late with their appeal to antiquity: we take the cause to a higher court, and summon them before judges more ancient than their "grey-bearded fathers." It is not the characteristic of this stirring and onward generation to worship the past. Society can never, never be recalled to the

quiescent state in which priests would keep it.—The occupation of the charmer is gone.

To the short-sighted, the gas-lamps in the street are spread into large globes of light; and so the luminaries that shone in the night of the middle ages appear many degrees larger than they really are. And as a row of lamps running along a street for half a mile, appear to the distant spectator to stand before him in a horizontal line—so the fathers of six or seven centuries seem clustered together into a little galaxy, shedding an undefined and blended lustre on a single era of the church. Knowledge has dissipated these optical illusions, and supplied us with an unerring *lens*, by which we can see all men in their true dimensions and relative positions. By this we discover, that the first civilizers of mankind were themselves but half civilized—that the first reformers were but partially reformed. The first sowers of corn were great benefactors of the race. The men who cultivated the wilderness, who broke the sod and consigned the grain to the bosom of the virgin soil, in hope of a prolific resurrection, deserve all praise; but are we to make them our masters in the science of agriculture?

The primitive *weavers* should be mentioned with respect: but we should not, for their sakes, condemn the power-loom as a heresy. The heroic individuals that launched the first boat upon the sea, and unfurled the first sail to the breeze, deserved to be celebrated, as they have been, by the greatest of poets; but shall we quote old Homer to prove that the *Great Western* is an apostate, because she does not sail according to the creed of the ancient mariners?

Those who contemplate the wonders of modern science, cannot regard the ancients as anything more than pioneers in the field of human improvement. As such we are grateful to them; but when persons tell us we must not disturb the landmarks fixed by these fathers and reformers, we only smile at their *child-like* simplicity—and pass on! Happily the Chris-

tian Fathers have left us something to judge them by. We have their works—their writings and their reasonings. We can tell whether they thought accurately, composed correctly, reasoned logically;—and we can see very plainly, that a larger portion of knowledge and sound sense would have detracted nothing from their sanctity. Happy would it have been for their characters, if they had trusted their fame to tradition; if they had never argued, interpreted, or criticised. But *littera scripta manet*. Their writings remain, and we judge them by their works. We would not tarnish the laurels of the reformers;—we give them honour for their intrepidity in assailing existing abuses, for their fortitude in bearing persecution, for their public spirit in labouring and suffering for mankind and posterity. But, on the same principle, we honour the reformers of the present day, and cheer them on to victory. And we cannot see the consistency of those who adorn the sepulchres of the prophets, and yet slander the men who are carrying on the work which they reluctantly left unfinished.

We know that the fathers saw our day in the distance and rejoiced; and that our eyes are blessed, because we enjoy what they longed to behold, “but died without the sight.” Our attention, like theirs, is directed towards the FUTURE, which is teeming with unheard of and unimagined wonders. Invention has outstripped the most sanguine expectation, and all minds are waiting for new miracles of art to be evolved on the vast panorama of this passing world. Tell men, whose hearts are beating with anticipations like these, to go kneel to the ancients! Tell those who have studied the Bible and its interpretation from beginning to end—who have pondered human nature in the church and world, through the history of centuries—whose minds are nourished with the most precious productions of the ablest men that have ever recorded their thoughts—whose hearts are glowing with the unquenchable love of *Truth*—tell such to bend their judgment and conscience to a clique of cloistered *Saints*, in the tenth century, who conned illuminated

manuscripts, or told their beads, and slumbered and dreamed before a death's head and cross-bones. How preposterous! While, therefore, the bark of Protestantism is floated gently along on the rising tide of knowledge and improvement, the churches that cling to antiquity are bound to the bottom of the stream, and must expect to be stranded amidst slime and weeds.

There are some who think the liberty of conscience granted to the people, the privileges they enjoy, and the independence they assert, will prove fatal to Protestantism: they are mistaken. In a former age, it might be so; but now these things are the strength of Protestantism. The spirit of dissent is rising and remonstrating in every church on earth. There is an incipient Protestantism working mightily in the darkest and most despotic systems. There is a commingling of elements, a shaking of foundations, a rocking of thrones, which blanch the face of purpled despotism, and palsies his iron heart.

The amazing spread of knowledge among the middle and working classes—the influence of diffused literature and wealth—the feelings of independence they engender—the capability of thinking, and the habit of judging of things by their real bearings and utility—the exploding of technicalities, and the ascendancy of common sense—the working of Sunday-schools, and improved systems of education—the free intercourse of different classes and different nations—the facility of communication between them—the commercial activity and enterprise—the spirit of investigation—the clashing and commingling of minds—the breaking up of old sectarian social ties, and the multiplication of new and liberal ones—the amazing supply of copies of the Word of God, and the increasing multitude of those who publish it, not coldly and carelessly, but energetically and solemnly—the restless activity and excited vitality of this age—all, all speak the speedy approach of a new era. They are the throes of a moral revolution. Hence the power of that religion which rests, not on prescriptive rights—which consists not in fixed forms,

nor in ritual virtues, nor in ceremonial and sacramental sanctity, nor in sacerdotal authority; a religion which harmonises with all that is generous, free, honest, independent, philanthropic, deeply moral and spiritual in the world around, attracting and assimilating,—and, becoming the pervading, ruling, sanctifying, and crowning spirit of the whole!

This is a most *exacting* age in reference to all public institutions. Men are satisfied with nothing but beneficial results to the human race, in return for their taxes or donations. Every fruitless institute, therefore, is in danger of being cut down and cast into the fire; for all things of this kind are tried by the test of utility. If they cannot be made to work well, they must not be in the way. Past services are forgotten in their present decrepitude; and they are compelled to retire before the march of civilization, like the aged Indian, who curses the power that converts the wilderness into a garden, and drives him, with beasts of prey, into deeper solitudes.

No longer charmed with beautiful theories, or “benetted round” with metaphysics, the human mind is prone to the scrutiny and induction of facts. The spirit of the Baconian philosophy is not now confined to the physical sciences or political economy. It is invading the province of religion also, and is silently working a revolution in the churches; not volcanic, like that which rent society at the Reformation; but penetrating the soil insensibly, like the energy of the vernal sun, which quickens the roots of things before it develops their buds, and changes their outward forms by subjecting them to the power of an inward life. Let us not despair!—The Church of Christ will soon be called on to take down her harp from the willows, and sing one of the most joyful of Zion’s songs:—

“For lo! the winter is past,
The rain is over and gone;
The flowers appear on the earth;
The time of the singing of birds is come,
And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.”

CHAPTER II.

THE CHAIR OF PETER.

God, the Father of spirits, with an invisible hand, touches the springs of the inimitable machine, which he has so “fearfully and wonderfully made,” moves its mysterious powers at will, and controls its vital functions with a noiseless energy, like that which guides the orbs of Heaven. Cannot He bless without a crucifix, sanctify without holy water, enlighten without a ceremony, or even regenerate without a sacrament? Can he no more save without the priest, than a sculptor can make a statue without his chisel? Whence comes this divine power of the priesthood? From Peter’s chair! Peter fished all night and caught nothing, till the Lord of the sea filled his nets with a draught. And so would it be with the ministry, spiritually, if all had been left to the *Vicar*! But Peter, deeply conscious of ignorance and dependence, had no more notion of such an office, than he had of riding on the whirlwind and directing the storm!

Now, as the whole fabric of sacerdotal power is made to rest on this good man’s shoulders, we must first inquire, why he is forced to bear such a burden. Well, did not his Lord say to him—Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it—and I will give unto thee the keys, &c. ? Does this remarkable language mean nothing? Does it not invest Simon with a peculiar, exclusive,

supreme authority—and constitute him, in a word, Prince of the Apostles? I do not now inquire *what* the meaning of the language is—that shall be done bye and bye. But if it be what you allege, how do you reconcile the subsequent conduct of the Apostles towards Peter, and indeed Peter's own conduct, with the possession of such absolute power as the delegate of the Almighty? Let us look at the matter in this light.—I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say.

In Mat. xxiii. 8, &c. we read thus, “But be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even Christ—and *all ye are brethren*. And call no man your father upon the earth, for one is your Father, who is in Heaven. Neither be ye called masters, for one is your Master, even Christ.” Now, how could the Saviour have spoken thus—in such unqualified, emphatic terms, against the assumption of pre-eminence on the part of any of the Apostles, if he had by the language in the 16th chapter, made Peter “Master” of them all? Why tell them to call no man “father”—when he had just made one man *Pope*—which means father of fathers? Moreover, when the disciples had indignation at the sons of Zebedee, for aspiring to the first places, why did they make no reference to the claims of Peter, thus presumptuously set aside? Surely such pretensions could not have been entertained for a moment by these two brothers, had it been a fact, that Peter was made their Pope! There was a dispute among the disciples,* to see which of them should be greatest. It is impossible that any such dispute could have arisen, if Peter had been already invested with the supreme authority; for be it remembered, that this dispute happened at a time subsequent to the solemn address† made to that Apostle, in the presence of them all. Of its import they could not be ignorant; and thus speedily to forget the claims of their new master, and attempt to usurp authority which belonged to him, would argue a degree of stupidity or rebellious pride, which is quite incredible. And, as I hinted before, it is, if possible, more

* Mark ix. Luke xxii. † Matt. xvi. 18.

incredible, that our Lord should have abrogated his own law, subverted his own established order, degraded his own newly appointed Vicar, by giving express and peremptory orders to the other Apostles, to withhold from him every title and every mark of homage, due to his superhuman rank!

Unhappily, Peter's champions have been accustomed to reverence the Scriptures, not in the living body—not occupying their proper place, and retaining their symmetry, but handed down from one controversialist to another, like bits of martyrs' bones, or like chips of the true cross! Hence they often quote them in profound ignorance of the context, the connexion, and the occasion. No one, for instance, reading to the end of the chapter, without a theory in his head, would imagine that Christ had made Peter the immoveable foundation of his church. Only a few verses farther on, we read that the Redeemer turned and said unto Peter—"Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men!"*

From all these considerations, I infer that Roman Catholics totally misunderstand the words of our Lord to Peter, on which Rome tries to rest her proud pretensions. But others equally important remain. Who ever heard of a prince being deputed or sent by his subjects? Since the day that the College of Cardinals was founded, was it ever known that the Pope was sent by them to adjust the affairs of the church in another land? Had Gregory XVI. been delegated to visit Dublin, in order to settle the education-dispute between the Irish bishops, it would have shocked all our notions of propriety. The Pope sits in what he is pleased to call Peter's chair, and sends his legates to transact his business in distant places—for the viceroy of God is not omnipresent! Now, as Peter, the first

* The Oxford Divines labour hard, in Tract 49, to prove that "a peculiar place is occupied by St. Peter,"—that there was "a covenant made with Simon, the blessed CHIEFTAIN of a blessed company!"

of the Popes, was unquestionably the greatest, is it not strange that *he* did not stay at home on his throne, and send his servants, the Apostles, to any part of the world that required their presence? But in Acts viii. 14, we read as follows—"Now, when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received the word of God, **THEY SENT** unto them Peter and John."

The Apostle of the Gentiles was unquestionably one of the humblest of men. He calls himself the chief of sinners—avows that he was not fit to be called an Apostle—and that he was less than the least of all saints; no man was ever less disposed to exalt himself unduly; and no man more strenuously preached the duty of submission to those who have the rule over us, and of esteeming them very highly in love for their work's sake. Yet this is the man who declares that he was not a whit behind the very chiefest Apostles!* Could he possibly say this, if it were not true? And how could it possibly be true, if Peter were his *prince*—if he were only one of the *sheep* which the head of the church was exhorted to feed? What! the holy, the humble, the just and generous Paul, declare thus emphatically, that he was not a whit behind the *Vicar of Christ*—the Vicegerent of God—the Prince of the Apostles—the supreme Ruler of the church on earth! If the Roman doctrine be true, Paul must be set down as most ridiculously conceited, and insufferably arrogant. Let the Catholic reader only reflect: suppose any cardinal or bishop to declare, in a public document, that he is himself not a whit inferior to the Chief Pastor of his church, even to the Pope—that he is not inferior to his *superior*! and what would be thought of him? Is not the conclusion irresistible, that there was no difference of *rank* among the Apostles? Observe, Paul does not say the chief *Apostle* in the singular,—which he must have done, had Peter been supreme. He includes James and John, "who seemed to be pil-

* 2d Cor. xi. 5.

lars ;" but, whatsoever they were, they added nothing to him.

Again, in addressing the Galatian churches, the same Apostle declares, that he *withstood Peter to the face*, because he was to be blamed.* Here we have one of the holiest of men at war with his master—resisting his spiritual father—turning like a rebellious ram against his shepherd—kicking against legitimate authority—resisting the ordinance of God—contumaciously refusing to hear the church,—in a word, rebelling against his sovereign ! Had Paul done so, his name would be known to the church only as that of a proud, presumptuous heretic. There lived not a man who withstood the Pope to his face, for ten centuries, who was not punished till he submitted, or, if very obstinate, sent to the flames. But it does not appear that the disciples rallied round Peter, the prince, and put down Paul, the rebel ! Oh, no—they acknowledged no king but Jesus Christ—and Peter was merely a brother among the twelve, as humble as any of them !—*Therefore*, the Papal supremacy cannot hang by Peter.

So much for the improbability—I may say impossibility—of the meaning ascribed by Catholics to Mat. xvi. 17—19. Let us now examine the passage somewhat critically. But the reader is requested to carry one thought with him to the investigation,—it concerns the Scriptural manner of treating of our Lord's relation to his church. Is that church compared to a tree ? He is the vine,—his people are the branches. To a human body ? He is the head,—they are the members. To a temple ? He is the foundation, the chief corner-stone,—they are living stones built upon it. He has the pre-eminence, being head over all to his church. Let us dwell a little on the metaphor of a building. The prophet Isaiah thus speaks of the foundation of the Christian church :—" Behold I lay in Zion, for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone,—a sure foundation : he that believeth shall not make

* Gal. ii. 11.

haste.”* According to Catholic notions, this passage should be a prediction concerning *him*, to whom our Saviour said,—“Thou art Peter, and on this Rock I will build my church.” The prophet is speaking of the foundation, the sure foundation of the Christian church;—Peter is that foundation, according to the Roman theology: therefore Isaiah must refer to *Peter*! But does he? Hear how Peter himself applies the prophecy! “If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious: to whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,—ye, also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house.”† Here the venerable Apostle says not a word about *himself* as a foundation. To Christ all the glory is given. Indeed, any such pretension on his part would have been the rankest heresy. Attend to my proof.

Paul, speaking by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, thus describes the foundation of the church:—“As a wise master-builder, I have laid *the foundation*. . . . For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST.”‡—“And (ye) are built on the foundation of the *apostles and prophets*, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF being the chief corner stone, IN WHOM (rather *on* whom) *all* the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple *in the Lord*; in WHOM ye also are builded together, for an habitation of God, through the Spirit.”§

In the last passage, there is a slight modification of the figure, but it is explained by the preceding one. Speaking absolutely, Christ is the foundation,—the *only* foundation of the Christian temple, and no man can lay any other. But when the great mass of believers is viewed under the idea of living stones,—“the apostles and prophets” present themselves as occupying

* Isaiah, xxviii. 16.

† 1st Peter, ii. 4, 5.

‡ 1 Cor. iii. 10, 11. “The Christian Church was not, could not be founded till our Lord was risen; seeing it was to be founded upon his resurrection,”—SAGE. Hence our Lord says, “I *will* build my church,” not I *do*.

§ Ephes. ii. 19—22.

the chief and most honourable place in the building ; still, all are resting ON CHRIST, and sustained by Him—the “Rock of ages.” Now, the reader cannot fail to observe, that there is here no allusion at all to the exclusive prerogative of Peter. If *he* were *the rock* on which the church was built, in any pre-eminent or peculiar sense, how could it possibly avoid the notice of his beloved brother Paul, who would have most gratefully and cheerfully acknowledged any distinction that justly belonged to him? It is clear to demonstration, that the writer to whom, under the Spirit of God, we owe so much of the New Testament, knew nothing whatever about the wonderful distinction assigned to Peter by the Church of Rome. He is confounded (without being as much as named or alluded to, personally) with the whole company of “*apostles and prophets*.” In the vision of the church presented to John in the Apocalypse,—“the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in it the names of the *twelve* apostles of the Lamb.” Here again Peter is lost sight of, and is on a perfect level with his brethren.*

Thus, we find, that all the scriptural representations of the true church of Christ, as a building, are utterly inconsistent with the Roman Catholic interpretation of the celebrated text under consideration. The parallel passages—the analogy of scripture—the prerogatives of Christ—the claims of the other apostles—the impossibility of trusting to a *creature*—*foundation* without being “confounded”—the *independent* bearing of the other apostles towards Peter—the fact, that he never, in a single instance, acted the *Pope*—that he assumed no lofty titles—affected no lordship over his brethren—all these considerations and many more, equally cogent, constrain us to reject, as the figment of an ignorant age, the idea that the church of Christ rests on Peter.

Had Peter been Pope, he would undoubtedly have been “the living, speaking, sovereign tribunal,” we hear so much of.—

* In the Douay note on Matthew xvi. 18, Peter is stated to be THE ROCK, while CHRIST is only the *foundation* resting on it !!

Controversies would have been referred to him, appeals would have crowded upon him from all quarters, dispensations would have been granted, indulgences would have streamed forth from his throne in a gracious profusion, worthy the vicegerent of Christ; and his "*chair*" would have been almost overwhelmed with cases reserved for the Apostolic see! In addition to the Acts of the Apostles, we should have had another book, entitled, the *Acts of Peter*—the *Decrees of Christ's Vicar*, or something of the kind. Separate the history of the Church of Rome from the doings of the Popes, and what have you? It would be a strange history of a body that should leave out the *head*,—omitting the part of *Hamlet*. Was there ever a council held at Rome, not controlled and formally ratified by the Pope? Had Peter been Pope, would he not have presided at *Jerusalem* (Acts xv.); and, would not the decision, instead of being recorded as the decree of the apostles, elders, and brethren, have gone forth as Peter's *BULL*?

It is the prerogative of a prince to choose his own ministers and ambassadors; and the Pope claims the appointment of all bishops in his church. At least, without his sanction, they cannot be consecrated. Peter, as prince of the apostles, and Vicar of Christ, must then have nominated a successor to Judas; he must also have consecrated Paul, and Titus, and Timothy, and all the new bishops! Alas! for the high church party, we read of nothing of the kind!—The hundred and twenty disciples "*appointed two*"—"and *they* prayed"—and *they* gave forth their lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles."* Peter indeed, with his usual zeal, proposed the matter, but he had no more to do with the appointment than the rest.

But the text has some meaning? Certainly; and we shall now see what it is.—Our Lord, according to his custom of illustrating spiritual things by natural,† alluded to the apostle's

* Acts i. 15.

† See John iv. 6, &c.

name (*Petros*) when introducing the foundation of his church, suggested by Peter's confession of him as the Messiah. When we turn, however, to the original Greek, we find a remarkable variation in the words, the "*rock*," on which he declares he will build his church, is *not* the name given to Simon.—That is *Petros* (Πετρος); but the *foundation* is *Petra* (Πετρα). Had our Lord meant to build on "*Peter*," the language would have been *epi touto to Petro* (ἐπὶ τούτῳ τῷ Πετρῷ), and not (*as it is*) *epi taute te Petra* (ἐπὶ ταυτῇ τῇ Πετρᾷ). *Petros*, the name of the Apostle means, usually, a stone, a fragment of a rock,* whereas *Petra*—the foundation, always means a solid rock—at least it always does so in the New Testament. For example—in Matt. vii. 24, the "*rock*" on which the house is built is *Petra*. We read (Matt. xxvii. 60) of a "*new tomb in a rock*"—(*Petra*.) In Rom. ix. 33, the "*rock of offence*" is *Petra*; and in Rev. vi. 15, the "*rocks in the mountains*," the same. In no case is the surname of Simon spoken of as a rock to build on; nor is it the word used when believers are called living stones. *Lithos* (λίθος) is the term employed on such occasions.

I have made this matter as plain as possible to those who do not understand Greek. The gist of the whole is this: "*Peter*" is never mentioned as a "*rock*" to build on. Our Lord uses it only allusively, by way of *comparison* or *contrast*, changing the phrase from *touto to petro*, to *taute te petra*; as if he had said, "Thy name is Peter—a fragment of a rock—and (*and* has sometimes the force of *but*†) upon *THIS, THE rock*, which thou hast now confessed—I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

An attempt is made to set aside the force of this reasoning, by alleging the fact, that our Saviour did not speak in Greek,

* *Iliad*, b. vii. v. 270, and b. xvi. 411.

† The word *and* is frequently used in the Gospels, as a mere expletive, without at all connecting the *meaning* of the sentences between which it stands. This is so used in Gen. i. 2, and in other places innumerable.

but in Syriac, and that the word he used is *Cephas*, which means both a *rock* and a *stone* ; and, as it is used in reference to the foundation of a building, it is more natural to take it in the former sense than in the latter. This is a plausible argument, but it is easily answered. The reader is requested to refer to John i. 42,—“Thou art Simon, the son of Jona; thou shalt be called *Cephas*, which is by interpretation *a stone*.” (Πετρος, not Πετρα). This is quite conclusive.

Nor is this a new interpretation, devised to serve a purpose. It was the one adopted by St. Augustine, who, as Erasmus has remarked, applies the word rock not to Peter, but to Christ.—“Non enim dictum est illi, tu es Petra, sed tu es Petrus.” “It was not said to him—Thou art THE ROCK, but thou art Peter.” “Petra autem erat Christus, quem confessus est Simon.” “The Rock was Christ, whom Peter confessed.”* He also states, elsewhere, that the church was built, not on what Peter *was*, but what he *confessed*. That the foundation of the church was the “Rock of Faith” in Christ—which Peter was then taught by God to declare—was the opinion of many of the most eminent writers in the Church of Rome. Lunoy and Du Pin reckon forty-four fathers and Roman Catholic doctors who held this opinion. Among these were Eusebius, Bede, Theodoret, John Damascen, Theophylact, Odo, Ragusa, Alphonsus, Pole, Eckies, and Erasmus. A long train of *Saints* might be added, such as Hilary, Ambrose, Gregory, Chrysostom, Cyril, Augustine, and Aquinas. The Popes are Leo, Felix, Hormisdas, Gregory, Nicholas, John, Stephen, Innocent, Urban, Alexander, and the two Hadrians. This interpretation was, by implication, approved by the *general* councils of Nice, Constantinople, Constance, Basil, and the Lateran.

Another interpretation, *substantially* the same, namely, that CHRIST himself was the foundation (this is necessarily involved in the former) was adopted also by the highest Catholic authorities, including the Council of Trent, where Joannes de

* Aug. Ret. i. 21. & Serm. 270.

Ragusio declared without contradiction, that the Church was built on the "living and firm stone—the *divine* rock (*divinam petram*) ; and that Petra significabat Christum—the rock signified Christ." To the saints already enumerated, we may add Cyprian and Jerome, with the Popes Celestine and Pius. The list might be greatly enlarged, but it is quite unnecessary.*

The text now under consideration, is truly a *fundamental* point with the Church of Rome. If her foundation be broken up, what can she do? She obliges all her clergy and professors to swear by the creed of Pope Pius IV., which binds them in the most solemn manner, never to interpret Scripture, except "according to the *unanimous consent of the Fathers*." We have quoted enough to show that these personages are *not* unanimous about the "*rock*." No less than four expositions of the passage have been maintained by them; and strange to tell, not only is the weight of papistical authority on the Protestant side, but even Popes and General Councils, and those the most eminent, have given it against the modern Church of Rome, and all her advocates. Can any one of these deny the *disagreement* of the Fathers on the text in question?—Not one! The Church has staked her very existence on a point, on which the Fathers are divided—on which the minor gods of her own system are against her! Indeed, there are few texts in the Bible in which these most fanciful expositors are not at variance; and it has been well said, that perhaps there is but *one*,† from the beginning to the end of the Sacred Volume, on which they can be said to be perfectly unanimous, and here they are perfectly wrong.

Hence we see, that the Church of Rome has sworn all her priesthood, to expound Scripture *only* by a rule which has no existence. On scarcely a single text of importance are the Fathers unanimous;—how could they be so, living through a

* Edgar's Variations of Popery, pp. 133—140. Second Edition. Where the learned and accurate author quotes his authorities.

† Gen. vi. 2.

series of centuries, scattered over many countries,—differing so much in early education, in temperament, in social position, and in all the circumstances that modify opinion and vary the biases of the mind in men not guided by inspiration? It follows, therefore, that no Roman Catholic clergyman can explain the Scriptures *at all*, without violating his ordination vow!—A truly melancholy case for so large and influential a body of men.

The reader may now ask, and fairly ask—What, then, do you make of the “keys,” and of the power of binding and loosing, granted to Peter? I answer, that the question about the power of the keys shall be fully discussed when we come to speak of *Confession*,—and that it is only necessary *now* to shew, that the words of our Lord conferred no *supremacy* on Peter. Here, again, I might adduce a host of fathers, saints, and doctors, were it necessary; but, after what has been advanced already, as to the equality of the Apostles—as to the absence of every trace of exclusive privileges enjoyed by any one of them, or of deference paid to such claims, it is almost a work of supererogation to say anything more. However, we shall leave nothing unexplained. Our Lord addressed his disciples: “Whom say *ye* that I am?” Peter, who was the usual spokesman of his brethren, immediately gave expression to their faith, and answered—“Thou art Christ, the son of the living God.” Then followed the words in dispute. Whatever power was conferred in the gift of the keys, it was a power conferred on all the Apostles. Had not Paul the keys, too?—Had not James, and John, and the whole twelve? It is confessed, that the highest power symbolised by the *keys*, is that of forgiving or retaining sin—of binding or loosing. Now, this very power, in the most unlimited sense, was given to all the Apostles, at the very time when the risen Messiah was about to ascend into Heaven. It was his last, his parting legacy: “Then said Jesus to them again, “Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto

them—Receive ye the Holy Ghost : whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained."* Were the modern Roman Catholic opinion true, the last moments of the Saviour would have been employed in giving instructions to his *Vicar*—in directing his *Deputy* how to proceed in his absence—and inculcating on the rest of his Apostles the duty of implicit obedience to his throne. Something, too, would have been said about the seat of government—the "*holy city*" on the seven hills! The metropolis of his kingdom—the Jerusalem of Christendom, would not, could not, have been passed over without mention, in these parting communications. He who had been so explicit in his instructions about the Jewish Zion, its priesthood, and temple, and polity, would not have been silent about that *See*, whose "glory excelleth!" How is it, that the "mother and mistress of all churches," and the spotless "spouse of Christ," was never once alluded to by her departing Lord? But it is needless to multiply these questions. Enough has been said to answer our object, which is not merely to refute false principles, but to set the laity thinking.

Another text remains to be considered before we quit this part of the subject. Peter had denied his Lord repeatedly, notwithstanding his confidence in himself—indeed we may say, on account of that confidence. He was left by his Master to learn the lesson of his own weakness by painful experience. True, he repented, and afterwards yielded to none in his courage and fortitude in the cause of Christ. His fall, however, called for a formal recognition of him as an Apostle, on the part of Him whom he had denied. Hence the question thrice repeated—"Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" And the expression—"lovest thou me *more than these*?" pointed delicately at his former boastful confidence. "Though *all men* shall be offended because of thee, yet will *I* never be offended."† This self-reliance, this *egotism* needed correction; and it was

* John, xx. 21—23.

† Matt. xxvi. 33.

now corrected, for Peter no longer insinuated that *his* love was greater than that of the other disciples. When our Lord said, “Feed my lambs—feed my sheep,” he simply restored him to the pastoral office, with an affecting allusion to his fall, and a gracious assurance of continued favour. But as the flock consists of lambs and sheep, it may be asked, why mention the lambs separately? It appears to me, that, in this very reference lies the most touching beauty of this passage. In the apostle’s former state of mind, ardent, presuming, and impetuous, he could not easily have sympathised with young, and weak, and afflicted disciples—which are represented in Scripture by “children,” and “lambs.” But now that the pride of his nature was broken down, and that he himself had shamefully sinned and grievously suffered, “he was able to succour them that were tempted”—even the lambs of the flock! When he was converted, “he could strengthen his brethren,” even the feeblest of them, with the comfort wherewith he himself had been comforted by Christ.

Such is the fair interpretation of the passage—and surely it is most edifying. But the Church of Rome finds an argument in it for Peter’s supremacy—an argument much relied on by her modern defenders. By the “lambs,” they say, we are to understand the *laity*; and by the “sheep,” the *clergy*, including of course, the Bishops of all ranks—for otherwise, the argument would not apply to the question at all. Now it is really surprising, that men so shrewd in other matters, should not see the manifold absurdities involved in their interpretation of this passage. Does not a child know that every shepherd’s charge consists of *sheep* as well as lambs? Think of a flock of *lambs*, say one thousand or two, under the care of a single sheep, or a pair of them, the fat rector and her poor curate! If the lambs are the *laity*—then as surely as lambs grow into sheep, the *laity* will all be changed into clergy when they come to a certain age! But this is not all:—the clergy will be, for the most part, of the feminine gender, being sheep; and instead of

calling them reverend fathers, we must address them as our reverend *mothers* ! The poor laity were accustomed to think that *they* were *shorn* by the clergy ; but this is quite a mistake : for it would be strange indeed for the sheep to shear the lambs ! I fear, if the clergy *will* be sheep, they must pay the penalty, and submit to be *shorn* ; a consequence, doubtless, not apprehended by the *egregious* critic, who first pressed this text into the service of the Pope ; or the professional advocates, who imagine, that *their* laity are such sheep as to be led by so silly an argument. Should it ever be advanced again in any of our pulpits, I hope it will be met, as it deserves, by a smile of pity for the *woolly* shepherd, who can deal in nonsense, gross enough to degrade even a religion of absurdity.

CHAPTER III.

RISE OF THE PAPAL SUPREMACY.

IN this peaceful conflict with error—error that has deluded multitudes, and led to the widest ruin, we would be “*more than conquerors.*” We are not content with silencing the mimic thunders of spiritual despotism: we would, also, rend away her solemn drapery, pour the light of truth into her chambers of imagery, and reveal the pious jugglery by which “the children of the church” have been so long terrified. Therefore it is, that we are not satisfied with merely proving a point—we pursue the subject, until not a single corner remains for falsehood to lurk in. We might stop, for instance, with the demonstration, that no peculiar authority, no supreme jurisdiction, belonged to Peter,—for the first link of the apostolic succession is fastened to the foot of his chair,—and thereby hangs Roman infallibility, of which Puseyistic Catholicity is the respectable tail.

Having shown that, though our Lord gave some prophets, some apostles, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers,* he gave NO VICAR—that no man, however exalted, is fit to occupy the throne of Jesus—we have pulled up the very roots of the Roman hierarchy!—we have dried up the very fountain of high-church authority—cut its vital nerve—and dug away the sand from under the foundation of the Papacy!

* Eph. iv.

No matter with what legal precision conveyances are made to successive priests and bishops, the original title is vitiated—no matter how correctly the sums are added, there is an error in the first line of the calculation, and all these proceedings are null and void. As the gift of God cannot be purchased with money, so, neither can it be acquired by fraud ;—and to many an unhappy man, who felt “ quite sure that he had the Lord’s body to give to the people ”—who fancied that, like a Brobdinag, he could dandle the Son of God on his hand, as if HE were but a priest’s play-thing,—to many such would-be “ familiar friends ” He will say, at the last day, “ Depart from me, I never knew you ! ”

What do you gain by making Peter bishop of Rome, when his name is divested of that halo of fictitious lustre, that illuminated cloud, with which it has been enveloped by superstition, or, rather, by *pope-craft* ? The mere presidency of an Apostle, would do no more for Rome than for Jerusalem, or Antioch, or Corinth, or Ephesus. If an apostolic chair entailed infallibility, then, indisputably, were the churches just named infallible.

But, *was* Peter bishop of that city ? Let us candidly examine the evidence on both sides of this question. In the history of every government, the *seat* of authority—the residence of the chief ruler, occupies the most prominent place, and is the most conspicuous object of attention. The name of Solomon is associated with Jerusalem, of Mahomet with Mecca, of Napoleon with Paris. The foundation of a universal kingdom—the erection of an infallible throne—the establishment of an immense hierarchy—bound to one head, and that head eternally bound to one city,—were a work so remarkable, that it could “ not be done in a corner,”—it must be the theme of eloquence, of poetry, and of *contemporary history*.

It is true, that the kingdom of Christ “ came not with observation,”—that no parade of earthly grandeur, no pomp of wordly power marked its progress. It is not of this world.

Still was its establishment signalised by glorious events!—The veil of the temple was miraculously rent—the dead came forth from their graves—the KING rose from the dead and ascended visibly to heaven—the Spirit of God came down in fiery tongues—the infant community was baptized with an effusion of miraculous influence from heaven, and this in presence of the multitudinous representatives of numerous nations, who bore the tidings north, south, east, and west. Had Rome such claims as *Jerusalem*, to be regarded as “the mother of all churches,” and the seat of Christian empire, she might well glory! If she could boast of her Pentecost; if the Bible anywhere said “the rod of the Redeemer’s strength shall go forth from *Rome* ;”—“Go, preach the Gospel to every creature, beginning at *Rome* ;”—“Kiss the *Pope* lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little; blessed are all they that put their trust in *him* ;” could Rome lay her finger on any thing of this kind, she need not have forged so many *Decretals*, and committed such infamous frauds in the name of the God of justice and truth!

I ask the Roman Catholic reader one question. Is not the history of your Church at *Rome*, the history of the Popes ;—and is not the history of the Popes, the history of the See of Rome? Of course it is, and could not be otherwise. Now, judge candidly!—How does it happen, that the history of Peter does not contain one word about his doings at Rome,—about his peculiar See—his Chair of authority—his office of supreme jurisdiction over the universal Church! Write the history of a bishop, and say nothing about his *episcopate* !—the history of a king, and say nothing about his *government* !—Incredible! Luke wrote the Acts of the Apostles, in which frequent mention is made of Peter,—but there is not a word about the remarkable and most important occurrence—his fixing the seat of his universal episcopate at Rome! Paul writes to the church at Rome, and has not one word in the way of dutiful acknowledgment of the Pope. His Holiness is not once alluded to, though

many persons are saluted by name in terms of brotherly kindness. There is only one way of accounting for this:—there was no Pope! Indeed, if there were, Paul's letter would have been an impertinent interference,—an intrusion upon the province of his superior. But Paul was at Rome himself; was a prisoner there—was visited by many, but not by the Pope; and in his hour of need and danger, no man stood by him. Would Peter have proved a coward in such a case?

But let us take it, that Peter removed his chair to Rome *after* Paul's time. Well, then, how do you account for *John's* silence on the subject? John, "the beloved disciple," lived forty years longer than Peter,—and neither in his epistles, nor in the book of Revelation, says a word about the Apostolic Chair, or about its successive occupants, the Popes. According to the Church of Rome, this same Apostle owed spiritual allegiance to the see of Rome—to Linus, Cletus, Clement, and the rest, though he was inspired and they were uninspired! But then, they were Popes—*Vicars* of Christ, and he was nothing more than an Apostle!

Again, we have the writings of the Apostolic fathers—Clement, Barnabas, Hermas, Ignatius, Polycarp. These writings must be full of the Pope, and of the see of Rome; and of Peter, as the founder of that see,—nothing of the kind! The imaginations of some of them were wild enough, but they never bodied forth such a creature as the Pope. *Pope* Clement writes a letter "from the church at Rome to the church at Corinth,"—and strange to say, he does not know that he is Pope! He assumes no authority over the Corinthians,—speaks more strongly of Paul than of Peter, and drops not a syllable about the latter as his predecessor in the *Vicarship*! He says nothing to the quarrelsome and schismatic Corinthians about the living, speaking, infallible, sovereign tribunal, established at Rome in the persons of Peter and his successors. This was much too modest for a Pope.

Irenæus is the first author of credit, that mentions the resi-

dence of Peter at Rome, and that not till 150 years after his death. Now, let it be remembered, that persecution had reigned at Rome during this period—that the bishops were in constant peril of their lives—that the Christians dared not meet stately in their churches, if they had churches—that the clergy of Rome did not produce a single writer of note for more than two hundred years—that when Eusebius entered on his historical work, he lamented he had no records to guide him—being obliged to proceed in a “desert and pathless way,” where he could not discover “even the footsteps of any that had gone before, &c.”—that it was an age of confusion, of gross ignorance, and credulity; when the very fathers and bishops were illiterate, their followers poor and degraded, with no colleges, no press, no stated assemblies of the clergy, no parochial system, no diocesan regulations, no authentic historic records. Who can trace the thread of the succession through this labyrinth of confusion?—Who so foolish as to follow the illusive lights that glimmer through the mists of this Cimmerian ignorance? What infatuation in those who would build Christianity like a castle in the clouds!

Irenæus takes up the tradition about Peter from Papias, and it was adopted without due examination, “on account of the antiquity of the man.” But, supposing that the Apostle suffered death at Rome, is it likely that he sustained the office of bishop there?—We think not. 1st. Because he was an *Apostle*: as such, he was sent to teach the nations. His mission was general to the world, and was wholly incompatible with the charge of any particular church.* A man of Peter’s ardent temperament and burning zeal, was not likely to sit down in any locality, while there remained other nations to be conquered to the sceptre of Jesus. 2nd. There were several successive bishops at Rome during Peter’s lifetime. Now, as there never has been a vice-Pope, we cannot suppose that the

* Barrow remarks, that this would be as if a Sovereign Prince became a Justice of the Peace.

vicar of Christ employed a deputy—that the vicegerent of God should be an *absentee*, and leave another to do his awful work. Irenæus states that the apostles, Peter and Paul, delivered to Linus the administration of the church at Rome, which (according to the venerable Bede,) they are *said* to have founded. So that, to this learned man the fact appeared by no means certain. Eusebius declares, that Linus was *first* bishop of Rome, which could not be so, if he were the *successor* of Peter in the same office. It is stated in the Clementin Recognitions, that Linus, Cletus, and Clement, were successively bishops of Rome, during Peter's lifetime. How, then, could Peter have been the *first* Pope? The canons of Clemens, Hilary, and Pope Pascal, as well as those of Nice and the Lateran, declare that there cannot be two contemporary bishops of the same see. The best authorities vary in their catalogues of the bishops of Rome. It is impossible to rely on any of their lists, when we go up to these primitive times; and the Puseyites, in fixing on one, and saying—*this* is the infallible line of the Succession—through *this* the virtue comes down from Peter—are like children drawing lots, where there are three chances to one that they miss the prize, though, after all, it is not worth a farthing.

Irenæus testifies, that Linus was made bishop of Rome by Paul and Peter, and after him Anacletus, and after him Clement; but Tertullian says that Clement was the first bishop of Rome, after Peter; Eusebius declares that Linus was the first bishop of Rome after the martyrdom of Paul and Peter,—and, at one time, that Peter was first bishop of Antioch—at another, that Eurodus was first bishop of the same city! Jerome declares that Peter was at Rome twenty-five years,—until the last year of Nero; and again, that Ignatius was the third bishop of Antioch, after Peter. Again, Damascus, bishop of Rome, asserts that Peter came to Rome in the beginning of Nero's reign, and sat there twenty-five years; but Nero reigned only fourteen years, and put Peter to death! Origen says that he read, in the works of a martyr, that Ignatius was

the *second* bishop of Antioch, after Peter. Epiphanius declares that both Paul and Peter were bishops of Rome.* Let those who can, reconcile these testimonies. How will the Puseyites choose between these perplexing paths, that cross another so often? and, after all, they are “avenues that lead to nothing.” Referring to this period, Chillingworth says it was “a mere chaos of time, filled up by the rude conceptions of Papias, Hermas, and others, who, like Hannibal, when they could not find a way through, would *make one*, either by force or fraud.”

If, when we compare the best historical testimonies with the constitution of the Papacy, and find, that Peter could not, without a monstrous irregularity, a revolting incongruity, have been Pope, how, then, shall we account for so early and general a tradition, to the effect, that he did sustain that office? To this I answer, that things equally false have been currently believed for ages. For instance, it was long thought, that a copy of the “*Mercurie*,” in the British Museum, was the first newspaper printed in England; but it has been lately proved, by the paper-mark, to be a modern production, and a forgery. The story of Pope Joan, is another case in point. That story was published two hundred years after the death of the supposed female pontiff—related by thirty Roman Catholic writers, and believed almost universally for five hundred years, till the revival of learning led men to examine history more accurately.

The tradition of Peter’s residence at Rome originated with Papias, a very ancient bishop of Asia, who was, according to Eusebius and other respectable writers, a credulous, weak-minded, doting old man, who picked up stories about the apostles from travellers, and published them as traditions. Among these, was the doctrine of the approaching personal reign, and other fancies, long believed on his authority—“on account of the antiquity of the man,” as Eusebius expresses it. The tradition about Peter will speak for itself. It appears

* Dwight’s Theol., Ser. 151.

that Simon Magus had gone to Rome and bewitched many people there, for they thought him a god. Peter went to oppose him. The apostle and the magician came to close quarters. Simon ascended into the clouds, to the great admiration of his worshippers. Peter being grieved in spirit, knelt down on a rock, and prayed so earnestly, that the arch-deceiver came tumbling down out of the sky, and—*miserabile dictu*—broke his leg! In witness whereof, saith the story, his blood remains on the spot “to this day;” and what is more, the traveller can also see the print of Peter’s knees in the rock, so pressingly did he pray against Simon!

This ridiculous fable, was for a long time supposed to be verified by the statement of Justin Martyr,* that he saw a statue at Rome, erected to Simon Magus as a god; but when dug up in the sixteenth century, it was found to have been dedicated to *Semo*, a Sabine deity. So much for the historical foundation on which the mighty fabric of Roman infallibility is made to rest!*

Let us look at the Papacy in another light. If Peter were vicar of Christ, and the Pope be his successor; and if infallibility came to the church in virtue of that succession, then must the government of the church be an *absolute monarchy*; and the Pope, speaking *ex cathedra*, must be endowed with *personal* infallibility. According to the Catholic argument, Peter *was* so; every thing depends on the fact that he was—and if the Pope succeed him as Vicar, he must be personally infallible too! If not, wherefore talk about Peter’s chair, and Peter’s keys? If the Pope be vicar of Christ, as Peter was—standing in his shoes, or sitting in his chair, then must the Pope be the unerring and absolute monarch of the church—the uni-

* Irenæus and Eusebius assert, that Peter came to Rome as Bishop in the second year of Claudius; but two years AFTER this, we find Peter in prison at Jerusalem, Acts xii. 3; and SEVEN years after, he was at the council there. He could not have been at Rome when Paul wrote his Epistle, A.D. 57: nor when he was led a prisoner thither, A.D. 60. Acts xxviii. 17, and Rom. xvi.

versal and sovereign lord over God's heritage on earth. The Jesuits who maintain this, are the only consistent advocates of infallibility. Their General justly argued in the Council of Trent, that as it belongs to the Pope to call councils and to dissolve them—as their decrees have no force without his sanction—as the powers of the church come from Saint Peter, through the Pope, the head of the church, therefore, as the ultimate and supreme authority, infallibility must reside in him, if any where. He also remarked, that the number of bishops absent from even a general council, is often much greater than that which is present; and that a mere handful sometimes established the most important dogmas. For instance, he added, in this very council (Trent), there were not fifty bishops present, when it was decided that *Tradition* and the *Apocrypha* are of equal authority with the Scriptures received by Protestants as canonical. This argument is consistent and rational. The Pope is the *head* of the church—if wisdom be not in the head, where is it? The church which we are commanded to *hear*, we are told is a *speaking* authority. Now, as it is not the foot, nor the hand that speaks, but the mouth, and as the mouth is in the head, (where else should it be?) it follows that the Pope alone is infallible.

But the majority of Roman Catholics reject this doctrine, in theory at least; and they contend that their government is an oligarchy, or at least a limited monarchy. The Popes, they say, cannot *legislate* without the assemblies of bishops, called councils. Be it so. But do not legislative assemblies meet in the metropolis of the empire? When did an imperial parliament meet in a provincial town? The Pope, as the sovereign of the universal church, of course, always called his spiritual parliament—his episcopal legislators to Rome; and as his claims were admitted from the beginning (we suppose it for argument sake), as the general voice of antiquity is in his favour, it follows, that all the infallible decrees of general councils, have issued, stamped with the supreme Pontiff's *imprimatur*, from

the *holy city* : so it should have been, according to the theory. As the Pope was not to legislate alone, as the *Autocrat* of all the churches, he must have called together his bishops regularly, and presided over them *from the first* ; and we can never hear of any thing so uncatholic, as a general council which he has not convoked and presided over ! This is the theory, but what are the facts ?—Oh these stubborn facts !

For three centuries and a quarter, there was never a general council held throughout the Christian world ! The *first* was not convened at Rome, but at Nice. It was not called by the Pope, but by the Emperor, to whose approbation the canons were submitted ; who, though *unbaptized*, and therefore unregenerate, and no Christian ! actually sanctioned, ratified, and enforced them, and gave them their infallible authority ! Of the first *eight general* councils, running down nearly to the close of the ninth century, *not one* was held at *Rome* !—not one convened by the Pope ! The *first general* council held at Rome, was in the year 1123, called the First Lateran Council !

Now, how could these councils (and there were nearly fifty of them altogether*) be convened, ratified, and dismissed, without the Pope, if that functionary were what the Church of Rome represents him ? How could those prelatical parliaments so uniformly assemble *any where* but in the holy city—and *nearly all of them in the East*—where the bishop of Rome had little or no influence at any time, except when his aid was invoked by some faction, or fugitive from discipline, by whom, when the temporary point was gained, the allegiance was thrown off, as quickly as it had been assumed ?

The extent of the Roman jurisdiction, in the pontificate of Gregory I., is thus described by Gibbon :—“ The bishops of *Italy*, and the *adjacent islands*, acknowledged the Roman pontiff as their official metropolitan. Even the existence, the

* Not all *general*, of course. Of these are reckoned only eighteen ; but doctors differ as to which should be general.

union, and the translation of episcopal seats, were decided by his absolute discretion; and his successful inroads into the provinces of Greece, of Spain, and of Gaul, might countenance the more lofty pretensions of succeeding Popes. He interposed to prevent the abuses of popular elections, &c.”* Through the influence of the Pope, the jurisdiction of the metropolitans was gradually abolished, and their powers transferred to the Roman See, with the ready concurrence of the suffragans, who were glad to be released from the vigilance of an imperious domestic censor; the disuse of provincial synods followed soon after. Meantime, discontented parties were incessantly encouraged to appeal to Rome, and were sure to have the sentence reversed in their favour, no matter how infamous their cause might be. “The progress,” says Dean Waddington, “of this usurpation is so well described by Giannone,” (*Storia di Nap.* lib. iii., c. vi.) that we shall here give the substance of his account. In the fifth century, the title of *Patriarch* was universally acknowledged to belong, *in common with the four oriental prelates*, to the bishop of Rome. His *ordinary* power, indeed, did not extend beyond the provinces called suburban (*suburbicaire*), those which obeyed the Vicar General of Rome; and to these limits it was confined, till the reign of Valentinian.† But, in process of time, as the prerogatives of primacy were united in his person, it was easy to stretch them farther. It belonged to him, as primate, to have regard and attention: on this ground, he began to send into such provinces as seemed to require such superintendence, his own vicars; in Illyria first, afterwards in Thessaly and Macedonia, the delegates of the *Roman* pontiff exercised patriarchal authority. This he presently afterwards extended over the whole of Italy, over Gaul and Spain, as well as over all countries newly converted by his missionaries; so that the Greeks themselves

* Gibbon, chap. 45.

† This is fully admitted by Fleury, lib. xxxv., c. 19.

acknowledged him to be sole patriarch of the West. The next step of the Popes, which occasioned no small disturbances, was to usurp the power of ordaining bishops throughout all the western church, which was no less than to subvert the rights of all the metropolitans.

The method they made use of to usurp the rights of the metropolitans regarding ordination was, to send them the vest or *Pallium*; for it was by means of this that the metropolitans were invested by the holy Pontiff with the power of ordaining the bishops of the province; whence it followed, that such power was not possessed by them, unless they had this grant of the *Pallium*. Here another point was gained—the metropolitans had not the power of exercising all the episcopal functions, until they had received the *Pallium* from the Pope. The last step naturally followed this—that the Pope would not grant the *Pallium*, until the metropolitans had taken an oath of fidelity, such as he required.* Another ground on which he advanced was this:—he contrived that appeals from the decisions of the metropolitans, especially relating to disputed elections of bishops, should be brought before himself; that if the electors had been negligent, or the elected unfit, the election should devolve on the Pope; that he alone should possess the right of accepting the cessions of Sees,—of determining translations, and the coadjutorships in the next succession; and lastly, that the confirmation of all episcopal elections should be vested in the holy See.†

When we consider the immense emoluments that came now to be annexed to the episcopal dignity, it will be seen that this was an enormous accession of power and influence. What party in the church could withstand a man, who had got into his possession the patronage of most of the Sees of Europe?

* It was not till 1152, that the four Archbishops of Ireland received a pall each from Paparo, who came over as Legate from Eugene III.

† Waddington's Hist. Ch., p. 160.—Note.

From what trifling beginnings great results often proceed! We might smile at the silly devices of Gregory to extend his power, did we not know that they led to such disastrous consequences, both to the church and society at large. He was the first who asserted the *power of the keys*, as committed to the successors of Peter, rather than to the body of the bishops. "And he betrayed, on many occasions, a very ridiculous eagerness to secure their honour. Consequently he was profuse in his distribution of certain keys, endowed, as he was not ashamed to assert, with supernatural qualities; he even ventured to insult Anastatius, Patriarch of Antioch, by such a gift. 'I have sent you (he says) keys of the blessed Apostle Peter, your guardian, which when placed upon the neck, are wont to be resplendent with numerous miracles.'" *

These spiritual pretensions, however, would never have been submitted to, without a temporal sanction. Gregory himself knew that the keys, marvellous as were their virtues, would confer no substantial power on him or his successors, until they were received from the hand of the civil governor,—and we shall see, that the saint was utterly reckless how vile and bloody that hand might be. John the Faster was at that time Patriarch of Constantinople, which, from being a third or fourth-rate see, had risen to a rivalry with Rome, in consequence of the residence of the Emperor, and the corresponding influence and magnificence of the spiritual ruler. It was the attempt to adapt the hierarchy to the various gradations of rank in the civil government, that led to such a multiplicity of clerical offices,—and formed such a long ladder of ambition, from the exorcist up to the patriarch, and the pope.

It was in the same manner, and for the same reason, that the Pope had risen to such high dignity and power. The bishop of the imperial city must live in a style commensurate with the grandeur of the Christian sovereign of the world.

* Baronius ann. 585, sect. vi. apud Waddington, 155.

This was the *only* ground of pre-eminence known in that age, before the fall of the Western Empire, if we except the prejudice in favour of Peter's See, arising from the causes already described. The removal of the Imperial power, which "did *let*," till it was taken out of the way, also contributed to raise the papal throne. Rome still retained its rank as a city, and was respected for its sanctity by the northern invaders, while there remained no person, amid the anarchy which followed, of equal rank and *prestige* with the Pope. Hence, he succeeded to much of the consequence belonging to the highest personage of the state.

Those friendly to the claims of John to be styled *Universal Bishop*, maintained that Constantinople, as "*new Rome*," was entitled to that distinction, founding it expressly, not on the *jus divinum*, but on the *jus humanum*. However, Gregory took fire at the assumption of his brother, John, and moved heaven and earth against his new title. He wrote to the patriarch and to the emperor, and sent his nuncios, remonstrating in the strongest terms. He declared that whoever assumed the heretical, blasphemous, and infernal title, was the follower of Lucifer, and the herald of Antichrist! "The direction and primacy of the whole church (says he) has been given to St. Peter; nevertheless, we do not call him the universal apostle; and yet the holy man, John, my brother, is ambitious to be called the universal bishop."* It no longer served the purpose of the Pope, to rely on the imperial name and dignity, since the empire was overthrown by the barbarians. Spiritual considerations, and high-sounding sacred titles, prevailed far more with these ignorant and superstitious conquerors. Gregory, it is true, was not the first Pope who exalted the chair of Peter; but he was the most vigorous and successful assertor

* In a letter to the Empress Leontia, wife of Phocas, Gregory cunningly insinuated his own claim to the disputed title—which, he suggested, their Imperial generosity would at once grant.

of these false and arrogant claims,—and those times of confusion and ignorance were favourable to his indefatigable efforts.

The Emperor Maurice could not be induced to join the Pope against his own Patriarch, neither could the Patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria be drawn into the quarrel. The latter endeavoured to mollify the Roman, by calling him universal Pope; but he was too knowing to be caught by this device; and, in return, styled himself "*Servus servorum Dei*,—servant of the servants of God,"—which his successors have ever since retained: making it the soft prelude to the most terrible and wrathful denunciations—to curses which only a papal mouth could utter. The master may, indeed, call himself the servant of his slaves, in the very act of scourging them—but this pride, that apes humility, is felt to be a savage mockery—a refinement of cruelty worthy of anointed tyrants! The father of hypocrites, who rises from washing the feet of beggars—"wisely kept for show"—to strike off the crowns of kings, and light up the fires of insurrection through Europe, laying nations under interdict, and overturning dynasties,—will get credit for humility from none who knows the difference between right and wrong.

Gregory professed to be very friendly to the Emperor Maurice; he declares among many other flattering things, that he was accustomed to pour out "tearful supplication" for long life and happiness to him and his family, that they might to latest ages flourish on the throne, for the felicity of the Roman commonwealth. All this was very well; but it so happened, before the ink of these apostolical epistles was dry, that the Emperor was murdered by one of his soldiers named Phocas, a common centurion, who immediately secured the throne by deeds of cruelty, seldom paralleled even in the East. He massacred five of the sovereign's children, leaving the father for the last, that he might die five deaths instead of one. He also murdered his brother and his only remaining son, with all the patricians who were faithful to their late master. But even

this was not the worst. The Empress Constantina and her three daughters had taken refuge in one of the churches near Constantinople, where the Bishop defended them with great spirit, exacting an oath for their protection ; for the church was then considered a sanctuary, which the usurper did not deem it prudent to violate. He, therefore, by the most sacred promises and pledges, induced the helpless ladies to come forth from the consecrated precincts. They were seized and carried to the place where the Emperor and children had been slain, and there they were slaughtered !

Let us hearken now to the thunders of Saint Peter ! If ever crimes cried to the Vicar of Christ for vengeance, surely these did ! If ever the terrors of excommunication should be launched forth, it was now ! Will not the “vicegerent of God” hurl this savage usurper from the throne, which he has stained with the blood of the Lord’s anointed ! Oh, the unutterable wickedness of Papal policy !

Before the official intimation of these foul deeds reached Rome, Gregory—the *sainted*—the adored Gregory, poured forth his congratulations, as if he were celebrating the birth or resurrection of the Messiah. “Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad ! and let the universal people, hitherto grievously afflicted, exult !” He praises the good deeds and piety of Phocas, and implores the Holy Trinity to prolong his reign, lamenting bitterly the tyranny of Maurice ; though he had prayed with tears that the said tyranny might flourish perpetually ! Diabolical as was the heart of Phocas, it was equalled by the cool iniquity of Gregory ; and it is hard to say, whether our detestation is more excited by the brutal soldier, or the unprincipled priest.

But the Pope had a point to gain, for which he was ready to sacrifice every thing—even his soul. And what was that ? The very title of Universal Bishop, which he had denounced in John the Faster as antichristian ! However, he did not live to realize his reward. He was called to the judgment seat of

Christ before he enjoyed the fruits of his sin. Twelve years after, it was proudly worn by Boniface III., though granted by an Emperor who disgraced human nature. Baronius [ann. 595, sec. xxvii.] compared the Patriarch of Constantinople, contending against Gregory, to the apostate angel rising against the Most High God! No wonder then that this Pontiff was canonized by the Church of Rome. She should have canonized Phocas also.

Lest the character of Phocas, given by Protestants, should be ascribed to controversial asperity, I refer the reader to the graphic account of this triumphant rebel and assassin, in the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.* Let Roman Catholics admire the hero, whom Gregory the Great delighted to bless, and from whom the Popes have derived their highest title! The Church of Rome, Pius IV. says, is the "mother and mistress of all churches." If so, the Pope is the father and master of all Christians. And, who gave him this authority?—Did it come from God, or from men? It came not from JESUS CHRIST, but from the monster Phocas—from one of the guiltiest children of Cain—the worthy rival of the Caligulas and Domitians of the first age of the empire!

* Gibbon, c. 46.

CHAPTER IV.

THE REIGN OF THE PAPACY.

THE arbitorative power of the bishops had been overlooked by the Pagan emperors, but it was ratified by Constantine; and his magistrates were instructed to execute the episcopal decrees. This interference, however, was confined to spiritual differences and offences, to such cases of a temporal nature, as were referred by both parties to the bishops, and to litigation between the clergy. The imperial decrees, for two hundred years after, rather tended to check the encroachments of the clergy, than to extend their civil immunities: so that, up to this time, they possessed no coercive power over laymen, nor, indeed, any which could be properly designated jurisdiction. The bishops obtained an accession of this kind of authority, and a more definite jurisdiction, from the emperor Justinian; but, "as no temporal power was yet entrusted to the spiritual judges for the enforcement of their decrees, the penalties which they could immediately inflict were censure, suspension, deposition, fasting, penance, excommunication,—penalties which, in those ages, not only inspired terror, but involved much positive suffering,—but to touch the person or property of the culprit, the aid of the secular authority was still necessary." In the West, during the dark confusion that intervened between Justinian and Charlemagne, additions were made to the powers of the prelates, but they were neither universally acknowledged,

nor securely enjoyed. "Charlemagne voluntarily conceded to the church, 1st, that the jurisdiction of the bishop should extend to *all causes* which *either* of the parties, whether clerks or not, chose to refer to it, and that there should be no appeal from his decision; 2nd, that the *whole body of the clergy should be exempt from secular jurisdiction.*" The council of Arles, in 813, whose canons were confirmed by Charlemagne, decreed, that "all the people should obey the bishops,—even the counts and judges." During the time of this monarch, Adrian I. filled the papal chair, and he made use of two *forged* instruments to extend his power, and enlarge the possessions of the church. These are the "False Decretals," and the "Donation of Constantine." They are thought to be the composition of some monk of that time. The former pretended to derive from the first age the spiritual supremacy of the Pope;—and this forgery shows clearly the *lack of better proof* for that dogma. The second proclaimed nothing less than that Constantine had conveyed the whole temporal dominion of the Western Empire to the bishop of Rome, as successor of St. Peter, and vicar of Jesus Christ, giving him unbounded dominion over all nations and churches. "It was asserted, that the original deed of the emperor had been recently discovered:—the monstrous forgery went forth, and spread itself through the world without confutation, seemingly without suspicion; and it continued, for above six hundred years, to form the most prominent, and not the least solid, among the bulwarks of the papacy."*

These forgeries, and other frauds and usurpations, as well as the actual grants of territory, received from Charlemagne and Pepin, prepared the way for the gigantic scheme of Gregory VII. to enslave the world. The feeble and dissolute pontiffs that succeeded Adrian, were unable to carry out the principles of the false Decretals, but Hildebrand was determined to

* Dean Waddington's Hist. Ch. p. 221.

make the most of them. They ordained, that it was not lawful to hold any council, *without the command or consent of the Pope*,—a regulation which destroyed the independence of those *local synods*, by which the church was governed for many centuries;—that bishops could not be definitely judged except by the Pope—that the right of episcopal translation rested with the Pope alone—and, that every bishop, priest, or layman, has a right to appeal from all other judgments to that of the Pope.*

One of the greatest of philosophic historians,† characterises the church of the dark ages by the following terms :—the Imperial Church, the Barbarian Church, and the Feudal Church. For a century or two after its establishment, the Roman Church leaned upon the empire. By the emperor, bishops and popes were nominated, councils were called, canons were ratified, heretics were condemned, and controversies suppressed for a time, if not decided. But the empire soon failed. It was a corrupt, plethoric despotism. Society was dissolved in vulgar luxury, or sunk in the coarsest vice and the lowest poverty. The old republican virtue was gone, and Roman imbecility had become truly despicable;—there was nothing fresh and vigorous remaining except the ambitious zeal of churchmen. The imperial system, worn out, and rotten in all its parts, fell into fragments. Fierce barbarians from the north of Europe rushed down on the fertile regions of the south, bringing violence and anarchy, pestilence and famine, in their train; while invasion followed invasion, till the Roman laws, customs, language, dress,—all disappeared, and gave place to a new, lawless, disordered state of society—if society it could be called—where there was neither law nor order. No doubt, the church did something to counteract the confusion that

* Fleury 4me. Disc. Sur. H. E. Sec. v. ; apud Waddington. Fleury not only acknowledges these documents to be forgeries, but exposes their clumsiness.

† Guizot, Hist. Civilization, Lect. v. vi.

reigned everywhere through Europe, and to arrest the progress of the nations to destruction. The power of the Roman See was the only one that would avail, if it had been faithfully employed for the renovation of society. But, as in the days of the empire, the prelates had been subservient and sycophantic, mixed up with eunuchs and harlots in the intrigues of the court, and invoking the name of Christ and of Peter to bless every villany by which the church could gain power or property; so was it in the state of things that followed. The church sunk to the level of the world—mingled with its wildest and wickedest elements,—not to illuminate, harmonise, or regenerate, but to turn every thing to temporal aggrandizement. The feudal system, by a natural necessity, arose out of this chaos; and, vicious as that system was,—corrupting to the lord, degrading to the serf—hostile to civil liberty, to mental culture, to moral improvement, to religion, to all the best interests of man,—yet the church suffered it to curse Europe for five hundred years, and, became itself the most barbarous part of the system! Bishops themselves were “barons bold,” clothed in mail—they doffed their mitres, and donned their helmets—cast down their croziers, and grasped their swords—forsook the fathers, and mounted their warlike chargers. They had their vassals and their slaves—their fortified castles, and their bands of armed retainers—yielding themselves up without restraint to the coarse sensuality of the age. Riotous and gluttonous festivity—brutal intemperance—unblushing licentiousness, were the order of the day, while all was overshadowed by the most incredible ignorance.

Persons of the highest rank could neither read nor write; many of the clergy could not read the breviary; many charters granted by persons in the most exalted stations were signed with *a cross*,—and this practice was so general, that from it is derived the phrase, *signing* a paper instead of subscribing it. In the ninth century, Herbeaud Comes Palatii, though supreme judge of the empire, by virtue of his office, could not

write his name. As late as the fourteenth century, Du Guesclin, constable of France, the greatest man in the state, and one of the greatest men of his age, could neither read nor write. Many dignified ecclesiastics *could not subscribe the canons of those councils in which they sat as members!*—(glorious fountains of infallibility!—blessed lights of the church!) One of the questions put to candidates for orders was,—“Whether they could *read* the gospels and epistles, and explain the sense of them, at least literally?” Alfred the Great complained, that from the Humber to the Thames, there was not a priest who understood the liturgy in his mother tongue, or who could translate the easiest piece of Latin; and from the Thames to the sea, the ecclesiastics were still more ignorant. Barbarous nations were baptized *en masse*, and admitted into the communion of the church, without the least illumination of mind, change of principles, or reformation of character. Their very idolatrous customs were allowed to remain, under Christian names: and this was the favourite policy of the court of Rome, whose grand object was to extend her jurisdiction, and fill her treasury. A host of ridiculous ceremonies were either borrowed from the Pagans, or invented to allure them into the church, by their pomp, and show, and glare.*

The history of the dark ages shows, that ignorance is neither ‘bliss’ nor virtue. Of all ages, they were the most vicious, and, of course, the most miserable; as usual, Catholicism sunk to a level with the world: and the heads of the church taught the princes of the earth some of the worst principles of their oppressive policy. Alexander VI. and Julius II. rivalled the vilest of the heathen emperors in profligacy, fraud, injustice, and cruelty. So loose were the morals of the clergy, from the highest to the lowest, that concubinage was not only

* See Robertson’s Hist. of Charles V., vol. 1, sec. 1,—where abundant authorities are produced, from the best sources.

permitted, but enjoined, to prevent greater evils. The immense territorial possessions, and other revenues of the bishops, were insufficient to gratify their rapacity; all possible expedients were resorted to, to wring money out of the wretched people. The bishops were among their most hard-hearted oppressors. Even Cardinal Bellarmine, with all his controversial caution, admits, that “before the Lutheran and Calvinistic heresies were published, there was not (as contemporary authors testify) any severity in ecclesiastical judicatories, any discipline with regard to morals, any knowledge of sacred literature, any reverence for divine things,—there was not, almost, any religion remaining.”*

Immensely rich and powerful, free themselves from all secular jurisdiction, and yet meddling in all the affairs of life;—having all causes relative to marriage, testaments, legitimacy, usury, in their own courts, the bishops felt that they could sin with impunity,—and they taught the people that they might do so too, except the payment into their coffers of a small fine for the most enormous crimes. True, there were green spots in this desert: there was hospitality in some of the monasteries, humanity in some of the bishops, and piety in some of the priests. But these were exceptions;—the desert surrounded them, and that desert was chiefly made by the papal policy—a policy that deprived the people of every right—that depressed the human mind—that chained the conscience—that depraved the religious principle—that corrupted the social feelings—that poisoned morality by its celibacy, its sacraments, and its indulgences—that fomented national dissensions and war, by encouraging pretenders, by crowning usurpers, by dissolving allegiance, by sanctifying perjury, and by opening an inviolable sanctuary for all “anointed malefactors” who trampled on the laws of God and man, for the good of the church. It

* Bellarmine, *Concio* xxviii. op. Tom. vi. &c.; apud Robertson, *Works* by Lynam, vol. 3, p. 328, &c.

is blasphemy against the Gospel, to say that it could not have harmonized the barbarism of the middle ages, if its liberating, enlightening, purifying, benevolent, and heart-uniting principles had been brought to bear upon it by the ministers of the cross. "The grace of God, that bringeth salvation," would have taught even that generation to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world."

But such was not the aim of the Gregories; even the *reformers* of the papacy used all their efforts to establish an anti-christian despotism,—for which the first Gregory wielded the sword of Peter, and the seventh that of Cæsar. The awful system, of which the foundations were laid by the former, in the seventh century, had the topmost stone placed on it by the latter, in the eleventh. It has been seen, that nearly all its spiritual immunities as well as temporal, were won by fraud or force, from the *secular power*—that they are earthly in their origin, authority, and tendency—and, that they have been sustained by forgeries the most audacious—surpassing, in the impudence of imposture, even Mahometanism itself,—that other mysterious system, which has run parallel with the papacy, starting up contemporaneously, and destined, it would seem, to perish at the same time. Men talk of the perpetuity and immutability of Catholicism. Look at the church of the Koran! whose faith has been stereotyped on the minds and habits of mighty nations for twelve centuries!*—a church which is not only more catholic than Catholicism, but even than Christianity. Account for that!—tell me why the cross fled before the crescent from the shores of Asia and Africa, where it reigned for centuries, ere it was welcomed by the colder climes of Europe,—and I will account for the lengthened sway of the popedom.

I will conclude this subject, by adopting the eloquent lan-

* Nominal Christians of every church, Greek, Roman, and Protestant, number only 170, while the Mahometans are, 188 millions.

guage of a most accomplished historian, who has certainly set down nought in malice against the Church of Rome:—"It is not necessary to retrace the process by which the spiritual supremacy of Rome was engendered and nourished. We have observed with a sufficient distinctness, how equivocal and circumscribed it was in nature and dimensions, when it entered into the ages of gloom and ignorance—how it grew and dilated in its mysterious passage through them—how portentous in magnitude and majesty it emerged from the cloud. We have followed it through its meridian course of disastrous glory; and we have seen that, even in its decline, it did not suddenly lose either its fierceness or its ascendancy. Indeed, however strange it may seem, that an authority so predominant in its power, so universal and searching in its influence, so extravagant in its pretensions, should have been at all created, and out of materials seemingly so incongruous; it would have been much more strange had it been easily or hastily extinguished. An authority which claimed the sanction of heaven, and which stood on human imposture—which pleaded the holiness of antiquity, and which innovated every hour—which combined in its composition, learning with fanaticism, the use of reason with its grossest abuse, extreme austerities with lawless licentiousness, much true piety with much vulgar and impious superstition,—and, which so applied those various qualities, as at length to acquire an influence in the policy of every court, in the institutions of every government, in the morals of every people, in the habits of every family, in the bosom of almost every individual,—authority so constituted, supported, acknowledged, and felt, could not possibly fall in pieces without a protracted struggle, and a final convulsion. It was impressed by the perseverance of fraud upon credulous, abject ignorance; but so deeply impressed, that before it could be effaced, the substance whereon it was engraven, must first change its nature: so that ages of gradual improvement were required, to repair the mischief which ages had conspired to inflict.

“ The effect of successful usurpation is to aggravate ambition ; and the more disproportionate the success to all reasonable hope and calculation, the wilder are the schemes which take their rise from it. The spiritual despotism of the Pope transcends any exhibition of human power described in any history, until we approach the surpassing magnitude of his temporal pretensions. The design of Gregory VII. was the most daring imagination of human ambition. To establish the Chair of St. Peter as the source of *all* power, secular as well as pastoral, civil as well as ecclesiastical—to subject all kings, and all governments, to the crozier of an unarmed, aged priest—to regulate the politics of the world by the annual meeting of a senate of ecclesiastics, under the eye of that autocrat—to dispose of all countries, and of all thrones—to create monarchs, and then to suspend or depose them—to sport, as it were, with all that is sublime and mighty in earthly things,—such was a scheme beyond the boldest conception of secular pride ; and it was engendered, where alone it could have found any nourishment, in the breast of a monk.

“ The temporal supremacy of the Pope was projected, *not* in the darkest moment of superstition and barbarism ; it was promoted during a period more enlightened than that in which it originated ; it reached the height of its triumph during the latter part of the thirteenth century, when Frederic II. had given an impulse to literature, when Dante was earning immortality ; and, but for the French intrigue, which transplanted the Papacy for a season into a foreign soil, it might have advanced still farther,—it would not, at least, have receded so soon. Yet its fate must naturally have followed the decline of the spiritual authority of the See, since it had absolutely no other foundation than that ; and, as it was of later origin, and more obviously insulting to every man's reason, so was its overthrow more rapid, and more complete. Yet its latest pretensions were not unworthy of its ancient insolence ; and, the presumption with which it distributed, in the fifteenth

century, kingdoms, and oceans, and continents, is recollected with astonishment, even by the Catholics themselves,—since the Catholics now, for the most part, admit that that branch of the pontifical authority, was an indefensible usurpation.”*

* Waddington's Ch. Hist. ch. 28, pp. 671—675. It is unnecessary, I hope, to recommend this masterly work to the diligent perusal of my readers. Church history will furnish the best defence against church principles.

CHAPTER V.

APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION.

IDENTITY OF ROMAN AND ANGLICAN CHURCH PRINCIPLES.

It is a fact, now too notorious to be denied, that a large portion of the beneficed and dignified clergy, not to speak of the great fountains of theological literature, are tainted with a spirit, which differs from Popery less than the blossom does from the seed, to which it is soon to give place. Their hatred of *Protestantism* is just in proportion to their irregular passion for Catholicism. However the *mark* of Rome may be detested—with whatever instinctive horror and pious antipathy it may be shunned, when detected on the forehead of Irish Radicalism,—it is certain, that the mystical lady, by whom it is imprinted, is clandestinely fondled by the Apostolical Succession party throughout the United Kingdom. Theirs is

“Not the pure, open, prosperous love,
That, pledged on earth, and sealed above,
Grows in the world's approving eyes.
In the soul's darkness, buried deep,
It lies like some ill-gotten treasure,—
Some idol without shrine or name,
O'er which its pale-eyed votaries keep
Unholy watch, while others sleep.”

The violence of this love for the purpled sorceress, vents itself chiefly in inveterate hatred towards those bodies whose

principles strike most directly at the root of her power. This bigotry, which has been gathering intensity from the efforts made to restrain it, sometimes forgets its cunning, and breaks forth in the fiercest vituperation.

The following extracts will show why the Puseyites hate the name of Protestant :—" We have neglected the real ground on which our authority is built,—our APOSTOLICAL DESCENT." " We, who have been ordained clergy, acknowledge the doctrine of the Apostolical succession. And for this reason, we must necessarily consider none to be really ordained, who have not *thus* been ordained. For, if ordination is a divine ordinance, it must be necessary, &c. As well might we pretend the sacraments are not necessary to salvation, while we use the offices of the Liturgy: for, when God appoints means of grace, they are *the* means." * " This is the *unanimous opinion of our divines, that*, as the sacraments, so communion with the church, is generally necessary to salvation, in the case of those who can obtain it." † " For many years, we have been in the habit of resting our claim on the general duties of submission to authority, &c. instead of appealing to that warrant, which marks us *exclusively* for God's AMBASSADORS." " By separating themselves from our communion, they separate themselves from THE ONLY CHURCH IN THIS REALM, WHICH HAS A RIGHT TO BE QUITE SURE THAT SHE HAS THE LORD'S BODY TO GIVE TO THE PEOPLE." ‡

Dr. Hook, vicar of Leeds, writes as follows :—" We ask, what was the fact, and the fact was this: that the officer whom we now call a *bishop* was at first called an APOSTLE, although afterwards it was thought better to confine the title of apostle to those who had seen the Lord Jesus, while their successors, exercising the SAME RIGHTS and AUTHORITY, contented themselves with the designation of bishops." Another of the Apostolic champions says, that as the second generation of apostles

* Tracts for the Times, No. 1. † Tracts, No. 2. ‡ Ibid, No. 4.

felt themselves so much inferior to the first, they did not deem it necessary to retain their title.

Who will believe that ecclesiastics, knowing the force of names with the multitude, whom they love so well to rule, would be contented with a title less dignified than that which truly belonged to them?—and that they renounced this elevation of rank from the Christian consciousness of not having merit to sustain it? This would be giving them greater credit for humility than is warranted by their history. But the modest avowal of inferiority proves, by implication, that the ancient bishops had no just pretension to be regarded as the successors of the Apostles, otherwise a body whose ambition was so insatiable—whose grasping domination grew so enormously from age to age, would never have relinquished such an advantage.

Let us return, however, to Dr. Hook. “Our ordinations,” says he, “descend, in an UNBROKEN LINE, from Peter and Paul, the Apostles of the circumcision and the Gentiles. These great Apostles successively ordained Linus, Cletus, and Clement, bishops of Rome; and the apostolic succession was regularly continued from them to Celestine, Gregory, and Vitalianus, who ordained Patrick bishop of the Irish, and Augustine and Theodore for the English. And from those times, an uninterrupted series of valid ordinations has carried down the apostolic succession in our churches to the present day. There is not a bishop, priest, or deacon among us, who may not, if he please, trace his spiritual descent from St. Peter or St. Paul.”

To this agrees the language of Dr. Hickes, an eminent church divine of former times, who declares, that bishops “stand in God’s and Christ’s stead over their flocks; the clergy as well as the people are to be subject to them, as to the VICEGERENTS of our Lord.” “And the successors of the Apostles, the bishops, like *spiritual princes*, exercise the *same coercive authority* that they did, in inflicting spiritual censures upon their disobedient SUBJECTS.”

This reminds me of a clause in the creed of Pope Pius IV., *suppressed* in the copy appended to the "Faith of Catholics," and also by the late Mr. C. Butler, in his "Book of the Roman Catholic Church:"—"and to take care, as far as in me lies, that it shall be held, taught, and published by my *subjects*, or by those the care of whom shall appertain to me, in my office."

Well have the apostolic party in England, not only now, but in all past ages, studied the lessons of their holy mother at Rome, and deeply have they imbibed her spirit! Protestant bishops, too, though bound by oath to an Erastian establishment, must be spiritual princes, and glory in the passive obedience of their miserable "*subjects*." Such doctrines become those with whom Hildebrand shines out as the best of CHRIST'S vicars, Thomas à Becket as the most illustrious of martyrs, and Laud as the paragon of saints.

Lest the reader should suppose me mistaken about *Hildebrand*, I will quote a passage from Bowden's Life and Pontificate of Gregory the seventh:—"And it is through their spiritual descent from *this* Roman bishop and his predecessors, that our primates and their suffragans derive their *clearest title* to govern the church of Christ in England at this very day. It is not, therefore, for us to look with jealousy upon the ancient glories of our *nursing mother in the faith*! It is not for us to seek to pare away expressions, or to reduce to their minimum of meaning the glowing testimonies of antiquity, to that mother's purity and honour. She, it is true, has since abandoned us; and because we refuse to bow down before the idols whom in these latter times she has set up, refuses to recognise us as her children. We, however, have not separated from her—we have formed ourselves into no new sect or party, but, by God's blessing, continue within the pale of that Catholic community to which she first admitted us. Nor can her recent tyranny prevent our eyes from reverting to the shining indications of her pristine worth, or our hearts from burning within us, as we gaze, with emotions of exalted plea-

sure, akin to those with which an affectionate and duteous child delights to survey the cherished mementos of parental excellence."

On perusing this passage,—which would be thought very extraordinary, if the church literature of the day did not abound with similar ones,—the following questions will probably suggest themselves to the mind of the reader:—

1. If Rome possessed apostolic power at the Reformation,—as the Anglicans contend,—and if all bishops derived their authority from the Pope, as the vicar of Jesus Christ, how could a small minority of those bishops, living in England, revolt against their head, without being guilty of *schism* and spiritual rebellion?

2. If they were guilty of that crime, have they not been ever since, not only "*abandoned*" by their mother, but shut out of the pale of the Catholic Church, whose unity they had wickedly broken?

3. Was it not *in obedience* to Henry VIII. a licentious, secular tyrant, that the English Church renounced the authority of her Roman mother?—and, is it not a fact, that she was so servile a tool of the civil power, that the number of those priests who kept a conscience, in the reign of Edward, Mary, and Elizabeth, never amounted to two hundred? All the rest tamely conformed,—the colour of their creed changing as fast as the chameleon's, according to the light that shone upon it from the court! They did not refuse to bow down to the ever-changing idols, which the temporal sovereign chanced to set up.

4. But, what becomes of all the wonderful virtue, which, as we have seen, high-churchmen ascribe to the succession, if the very power, to whom it was committed by Apostolic hands, and by whom it is transmitted to others, could, after all, "*set up idols*,"—and such idols as even the Anglican hierarchy had too much conscience to worship? How comes it to pass, that the most apostolic church in Christendom is also the *most idolatrous*?

Contrary to the nature of all holy things, this mystical power seems to be moved by a strong propensity to ally itself with corruption! It delights to brood, like the sea-bird, on agitated waters, that cast up weeds and mire; and, as if endowed with a charmed life, it survives in a perpetual pestilence, where every other heavenly grace is sure to perish! Forsaking the bright abodes of the virtuous and the free, it selects, as its chosen, its eternal home—the darkest city, the vilest court, the bloodiest throne in Europe!

Some champions for the apostolicity of mitres,—a sort of half-bred Puseyites—do not stop to trim their phrases, in speaking of the apostacy of Rome. With them she is not merely disfigured by a few superstitions, like an unshaven monk, or an unwashed virgin, or like a cup outwardly defiled, but pure within. She is a “*harlot*,” in face and heart—yea, the very mother of abominations—the fountain-head of all spiritual adulteries—false, hypocritical, licentious, tyrannical, persecuting, anti-christian, lifted up in pride to the very throne of Deity! Such are the views regarding the Church of Rome, put forth on all occasions, in every variety of superlative malediction, by those who yet contend that she has been the safe keeper of “*holy orders*!” As if this impure and apostate power,—a power that “framed iniquity by law,” and dethroned God in his own temple—that peopled hell with its favourites, and heaven with its victims—had been preserved by the wisdom of Providence, for the express purpose of keeping the succession pure and undefiled for the modern Anglicans!!

But they cannot take as much of Popery as they like, and leave the rest. Where one of its doctrines settles, others will follow;—they are mutually dependent, and cannot stand alone. For example:—in order to maintain the sanctity of the succession, and to support the supreme, irresponsible authority of the episcopal order—an authority said to be derived from the Author of truth and virtue, yet flourishing most in a soil of perfidy, and an atmosphere of vice,—it became necessary to

borrow from Rome, also, the principle, that the mystic virtue of the sacraments is independent of the personal character of the administer. Without this shield, the priesthood would have long since perished by the hands of its own dupes. The principle is so monstrous in itself, that every unsophisticated mind recoils from it;—and to embrace it in the love of it, implies a decree of mental depravity, which the *sacerdotal* spirit only can produce.

Accordingly, Archdeacon Mason's "Defence of the Church of England Ministry," written under the inspection of Archbishop Abbott, and dedicated to King James I., maintains, that neither "degradation," nor "heresy," nor "schism," nor "the most extreme wickedness," nor "anything else," can deprive a person once made a bishop, of the power of giving *true* orders!* This is more cautiously expressed by the authors of the Tracts for the Times,—but still they openly avow it:—"Had he been taught as a child that the SACRAMENTS, *not preaching*, are the SOURCES OF DIVINE GRACE, &c."—"The sacraments are evidently in the hands of the church visible, and these we know are generally necessary to salvation, as the catechism says—'The sacraments are in the hands of the clergy: this, few will deny, or THAT THEIR EFFICACY IS INDEPENDENT OF THE PERSONAL CHARACTER OF THE ADMINISTRATOR.'"[†]

It is thus that these wary divines feel their way, and slily slip in the principles of Catholicism, point after point, as they have opportunity. Without the principle in question, the ancient churchmen could not have done. Conscious of the glaring contrariety between their character and that of the primitive pastors, they were obliged, in order to retain their power over the people, to impute a mysterious virtue, a lurking magic, to their official acts, no matter how worthless the priest

* It is said there was once a drunken bishop in Ireland, who would have made priests for a pot of ale each.

† Tracts for the Times, Pref. 1834.—Tracts, No. 11.

that performed them; and so to multiply these binding and loosing ceremonies—these muttering spectres,—that they met every man as soon as he was born, haunted him through life, and did not quit him even when he died. It is not at all a creditable circumstance to the Anglican clergy, that they are now so industrious in insinuating this debauching principle into the minds of the unsuspecting laity. Nor is it prudent: it is not a principle that will be received in this age of “popular Protestantism;”—thank God, Protestantism is too popular for that!

What need is there for a priest being a moral man, when he can perform his work of *curing souls* as well, though steeped to the lips in vice? Scripture says, that the “prayers of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord;” but the “Catholics” teach, that the prayers of a wicked priest avail as much as those of the righteous, for their “efficacy is independent of the personal character of the administrator.” Jehovah demands of the ungodly prophet,—What hast thou to do, to take my covenant into thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, &c.? But our church *authorities* have no hesitation in overruling the decisions of Jehovah, in matters of this kind. The most depraved priest can regenerate immortal souls as fast as they are born within the bounds of his parish! He can forgive the sins of others, while he is laden with sin himself—can sanctify the people with his sacraments, while he is himself “led captive” by the devil at his will, and while his vile example spreads a moral contagion around him; nay, certain spell-words which drop from his lips, can change the bread and the cup, which he holds in his defiling fingers, into the body and blood of Christ. He can offer the “tremendous sacrifice” as acceptably, as if he were the purest of the virgin priesthood. Such are the doctrines taught to an immense body of youthful candidates for the ministry of the Church of England!—“O Lord, how long!”

From the preceding remarks, it is obvious, that the subject

of this chapter is one of the deepest interest, and of the utmost importance. If this awful power be real, it is folly, it is guilt, it is infinitely perilous, to trifle with it. If it is an imposition, it is the most impudent and the wickedest that ever beguiled and enslaved a besotted people! Let us, then, examine the matter more narrowly.

The Roman and Anglican bishops, it is said, are the successors of the Apostles. It is natural to ask, "IN WHAT do they succeed the Apostles?" When one set of men pretend to succeed another, it is natural to compare them. Paul says, "Not many mighty, not many noble, are called." This is peculiarly the case with regard to the Apostleship. Peter was a fisherman, Paul was a tent-maker—all were poor when called to the office, and continued poor till they died; but the *episcopal* office has ever been filled, since the temporal establishment of Christianity, by the mighty and the noble. Bishops became princes, and their chairs were converted into "thrones." In Burke's work on the French Revolution, he remarks, that four-fifths of the bishops of France (two hundred in number,) belonged to the nobility. I suppose, fully as large a proportion of the English bench are aristocrats; and the mitre may sit quite as well on a younger son, as the coronet on his elder brother. No one is anxious to succeed to Paul's poverty, nor to his *labours*. The Apostles were sent to proclaim the gospel to all nations. They were, in fact, itinerant preachers, brought from town to town by the bounty of their disciples; and nothing could possibly be remoter from their humble thoughts, than the pomp and circumstance of their imaginary successors,—who fare sumptuously every day—drive in chariots, attended by troops of servants—and vie with the grandees of the earth in all the "pomp and vanities of this wicked world."

But we will come to matters less invidious,—what were the signs of an apostle?

1. They were *inspired*. They spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. That glorious Agent descended upon

them, on the day of Pentecost, to fit them for their extraordinary office, as the founders of a spiritual kingdom. Are the bishops inspired? What new doctrines have *they* been commissioned to make known to the world? What new economy of divine wisdom and mercy have they been raised up to introduce? Do they know any more about the gospel than a layman may know, if he devote himself to the study of it?—The secret of the Lord is not with bishops only, but with all that fear him. *Inspiration*, then, was essential to the apostolic office; but bishops are not inspired, therefore, they are not Apostles.

2. The Apostles possessed the gift of *miracles*. They could cast out devils, they could speak with new tongues, they could take up serpents, no deadly thing could hurt them, they could lay their hands on the sick and heal them. Our Saviour declared to them, that, through faith, they should do greater works than even He had done. It is said, that Thomas à Kempis once called to see the Pope. His holiness showed his visitor the immense stores of wealth he had accumulated in his palaces, and facetiously remarked, “I cannot say with my predecessor, Peter—‘silver and gold have I none.’” “Neither,” rejoined Thomas, boldly, “neither can you say to the cripple—arise and walk.” If this be true of the greater, it must also be true of the less. We have not heard of any modern bishop attempting to prove his apostleship, by working miracles. They far outshine Peter in the silver and the gold; and, had they lived in his day, would probably have looked down on him as a plebeian preacher—a miserable mountebank; but, if one of them were asked to cure a cripple, or raise the dead, he would stare with astonishment, and, perhaps inadvertently, put the question—“Am I an apostle?”—No question could be more pertinent. All the Apostles wrought miracles, and enabled others to do the same, communicating the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit by the laying on of hands. This power, too, was

essential to the Apostolic office. The bishops are, and ever have been, utterly destitute of it;—the conclusion is obvious.

3. The Apostles had *seen the Lord*, and were appointed by Him, personally, as his AMBASSADORS to the world. The Puseyite divines claim this ambassadorship as “exclusively” their own. Let them convince us that they have seen the Lord Jesus in person—let them produce their credentials from Him, and we will believe them. We shall see, bye and bye, how different is the foundation on which their claims must rest.

Indeed, it is utterly impossible that the Apostles could have *successors*. With nearly as much reason might you say, that our blessed Saviour had successors in the work of redemption. The Apostles did a work which *could not be repeated*. They *revealed* the gospel,—that cannot be done again. They opened “the door of faith to the Gentiles,”—that requires no second hand to touch it—it stands open for ever! They laid the foundation of the church,—that foundation can never be moved. There cannot be a succession of *founders*, any more than a succession of inventors. “Other foundation can no man lay, than that which is laid,” by the “wise master-builders.” The Romans and Anglicans have, indeed, laid another; but *their’s* does not support the church of *Christ*, it only supports their own church,—a building which I would not like to live in, when the storm comes, and the floods rise.

True, bishops, like other people, may expound the Apostolic writings, and compose commentaries on them; but, if that makes them their successors, it will follow, that the learned men who write commentaries on the ancient classics, are the successors of Homer, Virgil, Horace, &c. Those who expound the *Principia*, will be successors of Sir Isaac Newton: and every common engineer may glory that he succeeds James Watt! Was every French marshal a successor of Napoleon? Can civil rulers be said to succeed the founder of their kingdom?—do *they* found it, too? *Moses* could have no successor: he delivered the people from bondage, and founded a nation.

Joshua led that nation into the promised land, once and for ever. Solomon built the temple. No one else could do what he had done. Would the bishops destroy the temple of God, that they might build it again? Nehemiah, also, performed a peculiar work, which could never be repeated.

It is manifest, then, that in what was *original, extraordinary, miraculous*, and, of necessity, *temporary*—that is, in all that was *peculiar and essential* to their office, the APOSTLES COULD NOT POSSIBLY HAVE SUCCESSORS. To say they could, is as absurd as to assert, that the Creator could have successors in making the world.

If, then, the bishops do not succeed the Apostles in their evangelical labours,—never travelling into heathen lands, as missionaries, to civilize barbarous nations—nor in their divine inspiration, as the authors of a new religion—nor in their miraculous endowments, demonstrating their heavenly mission—nor in their direct, express, personal appointment, by the King of Zion, as his ambassadors—in what do they succeed them? Strip the Apostles of *these* things, and they are no longer *Apostles*—they are mere ordinary preachers, endowed with an eminent degree of zeal and holiness. Is it not preposterous, then, to claim the name, without any pretension to the thing which that name denotes? It is worse—it is, I must say it—dishonest.

Do bishops succeed the Apostles, even in that to which not only every clergyman, but every layman may attain—I mean their sanctity? No. They are modest enough here, for here there was no room for delusion. The people may be mystified and confounded about old parish registers, and catalogues of popes—about the power of the keys, and the magic of the crozier; but a child could tell whether a bishop were “sober, righteous, and godly,”—and whether he pursued a life of benevolent self-denial. And every one who opened the New Testament, could see the contrast, in point of holiness, between Apostles and prelates. Hence the maxim, whose unprinci-

pledness was never surpassed, since Satan began to practise his devices,—that the ministrations of a wicked priest are as efficacious in the sight of God, as those of a righteous one. A principle, this, which mingles light with darkness, yokes CHRIST with Beliel, and puts the most awful heavenly power into the hands of the vilest of mankind, to be wielded by him *at his will*: for its saving exercise is made to depend on his *intention*. Yes, Heaven is made to wait upon the wretch's lips,—and Christ, by this system, is bound to the bidding of a man, who is at once a priest of God and a slave of Satan.

“We (churchmen) have always embraced the doctrine, that God conveys grace only through the instrumentality of the mental energies, that is, through *faith*, *prayer*, active spiritual contemplations, or (what is commonly called) communion with God, in contradiction to the primitive view,—according to which, the *church and her sacraments* are the ordained and direct visible means of conveying to the soul what is in itself supernatural and unseen. . . . Indeed, this may even be set down as the essence of sectarian doctrine, to consider *faith*, and not the *sacraments*, as the proper instrument of *justification*, and other gospel gifts.”* “Christ hath appointed the *church* as the only way unto eternal life.”†

Who that has paid the slightest attention to the terms of salvation laid down in Scripture, but must pronounce the Oxford system to be “another gospel?” Why are its authors allowed to go on poisoning the Church of England, still boasting that they stick to the *Rubric*? Better, surely, to abandon the *Rubric*, and keep the Faith.

Are not the Puseyites infatuated? What could induce them to revive such a doctrine in England, in the nineteenth century? Their attempts to ape Rome, will be an utter failure! They are unskilled in the art of concealing their artifices. They are but clumsy imitators at best; and it is too

* Tracts, vol. 2, Pref.

† Tract 51.

late to pick up and patch together the drapery of superstition, which was desecrated, torn, and trampled under foot, at the Reformation. Well was it once said, by an eloquent and zealous member of the Church of England, in reference to the tactics of the Catholic priesthood,—“their’s are the *depths* of Satan: ours, the *shallows*.”

It will be demonstrated hereafter, that the Apostles were not *bishops*, in the Scriptural and primitive sense of that word; and that the peculiar duties of the episcopate are inconsistent with the Apostolic mission, and would have prevented its fulfilment, and frustrated its purpose. We shall now enquire, whether the authority claimed for the Roman and Anglican bishops, be not directly hostile to the prerogatives of Christ—whether it is not incompatible with the rights of conscience, and destructive of Christian responsibility.

The Apostles were inspired—were filled with the holy Spirit—were fully commissioned ambassadors and legislators of Heaven. In hearing *them*, men really heard Him that sent them. To resist them, was to resist the Son of God. Can this be said of their pretended successors, by any but themselves?—and can it be alleged with decency, even by them? Will they presume to *add* to the Christian code of Law? Will they have the hardihood to assert, that our Saviour’s sermons to the “common people” are unintelligible?—or, that the writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, James, and Peter, are deficient in perspicuity, hopelessly perplexed in meaning, obscure in thought, confused in diction,—a revelation that needs to be revealed, a light that needs to be illuminated, a guide that must be guided, a standard that must be rectified?

All this, and much more, has been asserted, in substance, by them and their advocates. But they should not have said it, without first burning our Bibles, and putting out our eyes. We know what fathers and bishops have done, to prevent the Word of God from deceiving us; but we turn from their bewildering tomes to the Bible, as we turn from the

candle-light of Catholic altars, to enjoy the blessed beams of the noon-day sun.

No bishop can answer for a fellow-sinner at the bar of God. "Every man must bear his own burden," and "give an account of himself to God." He is, therefore, bound to use the best means within his reach for the salvation of his soul. And, as the Christian ministry is of vast, though not vital, importance, he will thankfully avail himself of that. But what, if some *lord* over God's heritage, has sent to the parish a man that "cannot teach, and will not learn"—a man who is evidently ignorant of the gospel, or as evidently disgraces it by his life? Must the conscientious churchman spend his Sabbaths hearing him, not to the edification, but to the subversion of his soul? Is he to be tethered to that barren pulpit, till his soul is starved to death? Talk not to such a man of the mysterious virtue imparted by the bishop's hands, in the act of ordination, of the "decent order" of the services, the beauty of the liturgy, the authority of the bishop, and so forth. His answer is—"I want the bread of life, and this man gives me dry morality, or destructive error—superstitiously or formally administering sacraments, which he does not understand, not as *means* of grace to those in whom they awaken thought and feeling, but as *grace itself*, to those who need have neither one nor the other. Does a man's duty to the church demand the sacrifice of his salvation? This man, to whom a stranger-lord, who cares not for the eternal welfare of my family, has granted or sold this parish, not thinking of our interest, but his own, I believe to be incompetent, senseless, and graceless. Why, then, must I hear him? Have I no choice, no liberty, no remedy in a case like this? Must I, at a ruinous expense, prove him fit for the tread-mill, before I can get him out of the parish pulpit—a pulpit now deserted by nearly the whole of the people? It is bad enough for the blind to follow the blind; but that those who have eyes to see, ears to hear, and a tongue to speak, should be compelled to follow a minister, so called,

who is spiritually blind, and deaf, and dumb, is too monstrous to be long endured by any people, however degraded by priestly rule.

Should we not obey God rather than men? And are not *bishops* men? Is not the church a human thing? Are we not told, that if an angel from Heaven come preaching another gospel, we should not hear him? Does not Paul direct every man to be fully persuaded in his own mind, and act independently on his own convictions? Did not even *he* disclaim dominion over the faith of the LORD's disciples? Church authority in Rome and Oxford is the authority of the bishops: their power rests upon the canons or Acts of Parliament, and the will of the Crown, i. e., the ministry for the time being. Is such an authority greater than that of the Apostles, who unanimously refer to CHRIST, as our one master, and one lawgiver?

A just man would respect the rights of the meanest master on earth;—what shall we say to those who usurp the prerogatives of the universal master in Heaven? If we may impugn the authority of an angel, and are bound to do it, why not impugn the authority of the church? If Apostles had the most profound respect for even a weak conscience, may proud prelates trample with impunity on the strongest in the faith?

Where, in the New Testament, are Christians forbidden to exercise their judgment on the doctrines brought before them, forbidden to try the spirits, and to separate from teachers of error? Where is it set down as a sin to “cease from the instruction that causeth to err?” Where are we commanded to support teachers who would subvert the Cross of Christ? Are we to countenance them in *that* work, from sabbath to sabbath? Are we to be deaf to the voice of JESUS, the great Shepherd and BISHOP of souls, and run after false prophets, who have climbed over the wall into the fold, on the shoulders of their lordly patrons, whose own the sheep are not? Shall we follow these strangers—hear these organs of error, or else be fleeced, peeled and scattered?

And whence comes this great power, in deference to which, we are called on to deny the Lord that bought us? It comes through the Roman hierarchy! It confessedly depends on the Papacy! What was its character? We have sketched it already, but another touch will finish the picture. "For about three hundred years," says Bishop Burnet, "the Popes were made upon the Emperors' mandate. Nor did the Emperors part easily with this right; but after that, the Othos and Henrys kept up their pretensions, and came oft to Rome, and made many Popes; and the most of the Popes so made, were generally anti-popes and schismatics; yet some of them, as Clement the second, are put into the catalogues of the Popes by Baronius and Binus, and by the late publishers of the councils, Labbeus and Cossartius. There was indeed, great opposition made to this at Rome; but let their own historians be appealed to, what a *series of monsters* and not men, those Popes were; how infamously they were elected, *often* by the harlots of Rome; and how flagitious they were, we refer to Baronius himself, who could not deny this, for all his partiality in his great work."*

This is a pretty spiritual ancestry for the Puseyites! A series of monsters elected by harlots! No wonder they are proud of their pedigree, and teach their priests to despise matrimony. What says the great Cardinal Baronius himself on this subject? Let us hear him:—"Oh! what was then (in the ninth century) the face of the holy Roman Church! How filthy, when the vilest and most powerful harlots ruled in the court of Rome; by whose arbitrary sway diocesses were made and unmade, bishops were consecrated, and—which is horrible to be mentioned—*false popes*, their paramours, were thrust into the *Chair of Peter*, who, in being numbered as Popes, serve no purpose except to fill up the catalogues of the Popes of Rome. For who can say, that persons thrust into

* Vind. of the Orders of the Ch. of England, p. 50. London, 1688.

the popedom, without any law by harlots of this sort, were legitimate Popes of Rome? In these elections no mention is made of the acts of the clergy, either by their choosing the Pope, at the time of his election, or their consent afterward. All the canons were suppressed into silence—the voice of the decrees of former pontiffs was not allowed to be heard—ancient traditions were proscribed—the customs formerly practised in electing the Pope, with the sacred rites and pristine usages were all extinguished. In this manner, lust, supported by secular power, excited to frenzy in the rage for domination, RULED IN ALL THINGS.”*

What holy links of an unbroken line—the grand, exclusive *conductor* of the fire of Heaven to the altar of God! For nearly one thousand years, says the Rev. Mr. Powell, in his able essay on *Apostolical Succession*, it does not appear that any person, *previously* a *bishop*, was elected bishop of Rome. Indeed, not only laymen, but mere boys were sometimes raised to the Chair of Peter. The practice of making bishops of laymen might claim the authority of antiquity—but, even in the Nicene age, the *people*, not the prince, or the Pope, chose the prelates. Bingham says, that “it was not reckoned any breach of canon to make a layman bishop, when providence seemed first to grant a dispensation, by directing the church (congregation) to be *unanimous* in the choice of such a person.† Sometimes persons were made bishops, even *before* their baptism. Thus, Ambrose of Milan, and Eusebius of Cesarea in Cappadocia, were chosen bishops while they were yet but catechumens. “In the early church, the immediate conversion of a layman into a bishop was a very frequent occurrence.”‡ The see of Armagh, was occupied for *eight generations* by persons who had no *ordination whatever*. The names of these

* Quoted by Southey, *Vindiciæ Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ*, p. 389.

† Bingham, B. 2, ch. 10, sec. 7.

‡ Rev. Professor Killen in the *Plea of Presbytery*, p. 44, 2d Ed.

eight married Primates without orders, are given by Colgan—according to Sir James Ware, who has not been able for *seven generations*, to ascertain the names of the Bishops.* This is an immense breach in the succession, and that too in the Primate's See. What confusion must have reigned in the subordinate bishoprics! Bishop Stillingfleet says, that at Rome the succession is as muddy as the Tiber. Canterbury was kept vacant by the king four years from 1089, that he might enjoy the revenues. Dr. Inett acknowledged, that “the difficulties of succession in that See, betwixt the year 768 and the year 800, *were invincible*.” In 1370, the Bishop of Norwich was consecrated by his own archdeacon. According to Fox, in his Book of Martyrs, the first *seven* of the prelates of Canterbury “were Italians, or other foreigners,”—and, therefore, the creatures of the Bishop of Rome. Many of the primates of England were consecrated by the Pope, his cardinals or legates;—and some of them by Popes whose own consecration was null and void, according to the canons of several councils, which decreed, “that they who were ordained for money might be deposed;”—“that there is *no power* in ordination, where buying and selling prevail;”—that such ordinations were “null from the beginning, and never had any validity,”—that if any one should be enthroned in Peter's Chair “by money, by human favour, by popular or military tumult, without the united and canonical election of the cardinals, such an one is *not Apostolical*, but is an apostate—a thief and a robber, &c.” But that the Papal chair was often seized and retained by the means here condemned, and by worse means still, no reader of church history need be informed. In nine years there were nine successive Popes in Rome, about the time so pathetically described by Cardinal Baronius. One of these, Sergius, caused the body of his predecessor Formosus, to be disinterred, had it brought before him on his throne,—*degraded it*,—caused the head and three remaining fingers to be smitten off,—and then ordered it

* Plea of Presbytery, p. 45.

to be cast into the Tiber; “deposing likewise all such as by Formosus had been before consecrated and invested.” One of the English primates was consecrated by this Formosus; and it is said that he ordained seven bishops in one day, and ruled the church for twenty-six years, filling up sees as they became vacant,—his name was Phlegmund. We shall not disgust the reader with an exhibition of such monsters as Theodora and Marozia, with their paramour Popes, and their Apostolic offspring.* During one hundred and fifty years, there had been one hundred Popes, and thirteen schisms in the popedom. That is, there were, on thirteen occasions, two or three rival Popes, each pretending to be the successor of Peter. Yet the succession must work its way down through these scenes of confusion, strife, usurpation, and civil war;—and, often the most artful and powerful faction carried off the Palladium of infallibility! Often, too, the Emperor conferred the *holy thing* like a ribbon, or a garter, on whatever licentious favourite he pleased. Many of the Popes were mere laymen, some of them but boys, when they were thrust into Peter’s Chair by the courtizans. They hurried on holy orders as they hurried on a state dress, to ascend Peter’s throne. Such is the course of THE SUCCESSION, on account of which, the Puseyites would excommunicate and *curse*† all Protestant Christendom!

It is easy for them to talk of the English Church, as of a woman that has washed her *face*, and is still the same. Had Rome nothing worse than a dirty face? Was not her whole head sick—her whole heart faint—and was she not covered with wounds and bruises and putrifying sores? A little outward washing will not remove constitutional corruption. The ancient British Church was far more Scriptural than the modern Romish one. But it was not *episcopal*, in the Anglican sense—it was far nearer the Apostles, and yet had not the

* See details from Fox, in the Plea of Presbytery; one of the ablest works against Prelacy ever published.

† The Rev. Mr. Palmer’s Sixth Letter to Dr. Wiseman.

magical succession. The Elders then lived in companies in their missionary establishments called monasteries;—*they* made the bishop, and as Bede says, “sent him out to preach!”—the chosen one of their body, *primus inter pares*—the first among his equals. To make way for Austin and Romanism (popery was not yet full grown) twelve hundred of these Presbyters were barbarously slain, some think by the contrivance of the foreign monk. *Thenceforth all the English Bishops derived their authority from Rome*; many of them were consecrated by Popes, and the papal power reigned over the whole kingdom. The Roman prelate sold English bishoprics—boasted that the King of England was his vassal—and as the “Lord of the Isles,” he made a present of Ireland to Henry II, that that monarch might govern it for him, and put him in possession. For the Irish Churches, though partially under papal *influence*, had maintained their independence down to the twelfth century. Their rites and ceremonies, like those of the churches planted by the Apostles, varied in different places, without interfering with their unity and catholic fellowship. Remember, that in this land of forests, wolves and ferocious factions, who were ever shedding one another’s blood, the population must then have been very scanty—indeed we know it *was*—and yet the island contained no less than three hundred bishops, about ten times the number we have now for our eight or nine millions; and in proportion to the population, there were then one hundred bishops in Ireland for the one we have now! This is an instructive fact. Could *that* episcopacy be *diocesan*?—Impossible! These three hundred unmitred and unlorded bishops, were simply Scriptural and primitive pastors of independent congregations.* But through the aid of English swords, the Christian liberties of Ireland were destroyed by the Pope. Such were the triumphs of papal catholicity, over the true catholicity of the Bible. The ancient Irish Christians were

* See Dean Murray’s Sketch of the Ancient Irish Church; and Usher’s Discourse on the Religion of the Ancient Irish.

sworn to no creeds, their consciences were not tied to the letter of church decrees, they owned implicit obedience to no human tribunal, and yet they agreed—they were one in faith; and it was in *their* times, and not in papal times (times of degeneracy in every land!) Ireland was called “the Island of Saints.”

Hear the Oxford divines themselves on this subject of Primitive Episcopacy:—“Few persons, who have not expressly examined the subject, are aware of the minuteness of the diocesses, into which many parts of Christendom were divided, in the first ages. Some churches, in Italy, were more like our rural deaneries, than what we now consider diocesses, being not above ten or twelve miles in extent, and their Sees not above five or six miles from each other.”

When the Christians were but a fraction of the population, and their bishops lived within five or six miles of each other, *could* these bishops have been diocesans, or anything else but parochial ministers, or congregational pastors? But, to proceed with our quotation:—“Even now (or, at least, in Bingham’s time), the kingdom of Naples contains 147 Sees, of which 20 are archbishoprics. Asia Minor is 630 miles long, 210 broad; yet, in this country there were almost 400 diocesses! Palestine is in length 160 miles, in breadth 120; yet the number of known diocesses amounted to 48. Again, in the Province of Syria Secunda, the see of Larissa (e. g.) was about 14 miles from Aparnea, Arethusa 16 from Epiphania.”*

These numbers are given on the authority of Bingham. The Rev. Professor Killen makes the following remarks on these statistics of the early church:—“When Bingham says that there were 400 bishops in Asia Minor, he refers to the condition of the church in the latter end of the fourth century. At that period, most of the village and rural bishops were extinguished, so that his statement cannot be considered as a fair exhibition of primitive arrangements. . . . How different must a bishop, even of the fourth century, have been from

* Tracts for the Times, No. 33.

a prelate of the present day, when, after the suppression of so many rural and village bishops, there were still 400 remaining, in a tract of land which is not much larger than Great Britain, and in which only a fifth part of the people were evangelised? . . . We are assured by Justin Martyr, that in the middle of the second century, the Christians, on the Lord's-day, met together in *cities* or in *the country*, to hear the *bishop* preach, and that the brethren or elders, as well as the deacons, were present at the service. We can prove, by the direct testimony of Clemens Romanus, that the country bishops were originally of the same rank as the city bishops, and that they were of Apostolic appointment. He tells us, that the Apostles, preaching through *countries and cities*, 'appointed the first-fruits of the conversions, *bishops and deacons*, over such as should afterwards believe, having first proved them by the Spirit.'"

By what process, then, were such multitudes of independent country bishoprics abolished, or swallowed up, by the ambition of city bishops, in extending their sway, and consolidating their power? By a very natural one, which many *poor country bishops* in our own times will be prepared, by their experience, to understand.

"As the disciples in the cities increased in numbers and respectability, the *city bishops* were placed in quite a new position, with respect to the country bishops. The city bishop was the constant moderator (chairman or president) of a presbytery, consisting partly of ordained preachers—the country bishop was the only preacher to a poor, and perhaps scattered, congregation. The city bishops took the lead, not only in influence and wealth, but, at a time when no system of ministerial training was generally established, they were, doubtless, owing to their local advantages, far superior in education and personal accomplishments. In the interval between the martyrdom of Cyprian and the Diocletian persecution in the beginning of the fourth century, the church for the most part enjoyed peace,

the Christians were generally protected in the exercise of their religion, and even in some cases promoted to the government of provinces; but, at the same time, ambition was busily at work, and a prelatic spirit filled the ecclesiastical assemblies with confusion. ‘Some that appeared to be our pastors,’ saith Eusebius, ‘deserting the law of piety, were inflamed against each other with mutual strifes, only accumulating quarrels and threats, rivalry, hostility, and hatred to each other, *only anxious to assert the government as a kind of sovereignty for themselves.*’ When the persecution passed away, the same spirit re-appeared. The city bishops, for at least a century, had been gradually acquiring an undue influence;—when Christianity was established by Constantine as the religion of the empire, their wealth and power were suddenly and amazingly increased—they were prompted to look down with contempt upon the rude and unpolished country bishops—their pride was wounded when they met such men in the assemblies of the church, and when they found them sitting as their equals in synods and councils. Hence, throughout the fourth century, we witness a continual effort to supplant and to extinguish them. The designs of the city bishops were facilitated by various concurring circumstances. The expense of travelling to ecclesiastical assemblies, held perhaps in distant provinces, could not be well sustained by the rural or village pastors—they had little learning and no personal influence—many of them, through ignorance, had probably been guilty of gross irregularities in the way of ordination, and few of them seem to have been aware of the importance of the privileges of which they were about to be deprived. In cases where deputies were required to attend the councils, the city bishops would usually be chosen to represent the churches in their vicinity. There is no reason to think that the more influential and aspiring of the presbyters and country bishops would be at all averse to the introduction of a diocesan episcopacy. They would hope one day to occupy the high places of the church, and by

seconding the measures of the city bishops, they were only preparing the way for their own future aggrandisement. Besides, the great city bishops were admitted to the confidence of the reigning emperor, and as they often appear to have expressed his wishes in matters of ecclesiastical arrangement, their measures would be the more readily adopted. It is certain, too, that though in that age the principles of ecclesiastical polity were very little understood, the means employed to deprive ordinary ministers of their rights, were devised with considerable caution. There were, in the ancient church, certain pastors, whose office appears to have been to itinerate in retired districts of the country, where the disciples were but few, and to create or foster little congregations. When a small group of Christians were collected, a church would, of course, be organised; but as the pastor could not be present every Sabbath in the same neighbourhood, it is probable that, as in many of our presbyterian congregations under like circumstances, an elder met the families of his district for reading the Scriptures and for prayer. Those who were first called chorepiscopi, were probably the poorest and least formidable class of the country bishops, and they were accordingly first prostrated at the feet of the city dignitaries. 'This order,' says Mosheim, in his history of the fourth century, 'was in most places suppressed by the bishops, *with a design to extend their own authority, and enlarge the sphere of their power and jurisdiction.* At first, they were merely crippled in the exercise of their privileges. It was decreed, in the 13th canon of the Council of Ancyra, held A.D. 314, that they should not be permitted to ordain *presbyters or deacons.* The Council of Antioch, held, according to Du Pin, A.D. 342, goes a step farther. The 10th canon of that council is as follows: 'It seemed good to the holy synod, that those in villages or rural districts, or those called chorepiscopi, *even though they have been ordained by bishops,* should know their own limits, and attend to the churches committed to them, and be content

with the care and concern of them, and that they appoint readers, and sub-deacons, and exorcists, and that they be content with the promotion of these, and that *they must not have the assurance to ordain an elder or deacon*, without the bishop in the city, to which they and their region are subject. And if any one dare to transgress what has been ruled, that he be deprived even of the honour which he enjoys; and that a chorepiscopus be made by the bishop of the city, to which (city) he is subject.' Here an attack appears to be made upon all bishops in villages or rural districts. We have already seen how, in the middle of the third century, three rustic bishops from a small and very insignificant part of Italy, ventured to ordain *a bishop to the See of Rome*; but now all such pastors are forbidden to ordain *even an elder or a deacon*, if a city bishop be not present to take part in the ceremony. Besides, by this enactment a blow is aimed at the *ecclesiastical status* of rural bishops; for henceforth, like ordinary presbyters, they are to be set apart to their office by a *single bishop*, whereas they had been formerly ordained by an *assembly of bishops*. About five years afterwards, the rights of parochial ministers were still farther abridged. In the 6th canon of the great Council of Sardica, held A.D. 347, it is decreed, that '*a bishop be not ordained in a village or small city where a single presbyter is sufficient, lest the name and authority of a bishop be brought into contempt.*' Those who imagine that the early village bishop was the inspector of a diocese and the leader of a host of clergy, may here discover their mistake, for it is admitted by the council that he was *the only officiating minister of the place*, inasmuch as a *single presbyter* was sufficient to discharge all the clerical duties required in the neighbourhood. It was evidently the design of this decree, not to deprive villages of the ministry of the word, but merely to provide that those who should be appointed to officiate in such places, should not be permitted to assume the name or exercise the functions of primitive bishops. *The power of ordination* was one great

privilege of which they were deprived. Prelacy here plainly reveals itself, and extinguishes the apostolic bishop, in order to promote the glory of the unscriptural diocesan. The city bishops had long before acquired a very marked pre-eminence, they had the influence of wealth, and respectability, and fashion in their favour; but by wresting the privilege of ordination from parochial ministers, diocesan episcopacy was systematically and effectually established. About the middle of the fourth century they had made great progress in the work of spoliation, and in all likelihood they felt it somewhat troublesome to attend to the numerous congregations thus committed to their superintendence. Accordingly in the Council of Laodicea, held A.D. 360, whilst they make provision for the subjugation of the remaining parishes, they also take measures for the appointment of assistants in the work of ecclesiastical oversight. That council declares, in its 57th canon, that ‘bishops ought not to be appointed in villages and rural districts, but *περιοδεῖνται* (or visiting presbyters), and *that those already appointed do nothing without the sanction of the city bishop.*’ As parochial episcopacy was abolished, the prelates themselves began to take precedence according to the rank of the cities in which they were located; and thus the civil arrangements of the Roman empire imparted a form to the polity of the church. ‘It was in the fourth age,’ says Du Pin, ‘that the body of the churches was perfected, and that certain rules were established for ecclesiastical decisions. The distinction, distribution, and subordination of churches were settled, for the most part, according to the form of the civil government. The civil provinces formed the body of an ecclesiastical province. The bishop of the civil metropolis was looked upon as the first bishop of the province. Some rights and prerogatives were assigned to him, and the care of overseeing the whole province was committed to him.’ Bishop Newton, in his comment on the 16th chapter of the Revelation of John, has observed, that as ‘the trumpets are so many

steps and degrees of the ruin of the *Roman Empire*, so the vials are of the ruin of the *Roman Church*. *The one, in polity and government, is the image of the other.*"*

Nothing needs be added to this admirable passage. The ambition which it unfolds is the besetting sin of city bishops, with flourishing and respectable congregations, in the present day. If a poor country bishop had dared to make a stand (as many of them did) for his own independence and that of his brethren, how would he have been received on going up to town to the annual assembly? He would have been shunned and slighted by his influential brethren, shut out of all their select society, overlooked in the arrangements of the public services, and treated by the ascendant party with coldness and suspicion. A bold assertion of his rights, would only mark him out for greater humiliation. For presuming to act without the presence or sanction of the powerful pastor in the nearest city (in the matter of ordination for instance) he would be branded as refractory. The brother admitted by him and his local associates into the ministry, would not be *recognised* by the city bishops; who would remark coldly and haughtily, that they did not know him. What hope could *he* cherish that they would recommend him to a good congregation, &c.? These influences are seldom withstood for any length of time. Influence gradually settles down into acknowledged power, whose nature it is to increase rapidly, and to surround itself with all the usual guards and forms of legal authority. An illegitimate episcopacy is by no means uncommon in modern dissenting churches; and when we consider the facility with which educated men yield to it, in glaring violation of their professed polity, we should not be at all surprised, that in an ignorant age, when the spirit and principles of the civil government were grossly despotic, the leading city pastors managed to subjugate their weaker brethren in the provinces, and to as-

* Killen—Plea of Presbytery, 2nd edition, pp. 31—33.

sume over them a prelatie lordship, which naturally and readily culminated to the papacy, in conformity with the gradation of offices in the Roman Empire.

It was the bloated giant of corruption at Rome, that taught other tyrants to make bishops at will, and continue them during pleasure. The Act of Elizabeth, which *constituted* our present establishment, was passed with the *dissent* of all the bishops, and, therefore, the style of lords spiritual is omitted throughout the whole of the act. Now, though the prelates in Parliament opposed the constitution of their own church, and disowned it, yet are all their successors bound by it. "The first bill brought into Parliament, with the view of trying their disposition on the head of religion, was that for suppressing the monasteries lately erected, and for restoring the tenths and first-fruits to the Queen. This point being gained, with much difficulty, a bill was next introduced, annexing the supremacy to the crown; and, though the Queen was there denominated *Governess*, not *Head*, of the church, it conveyed the same extensive power, which, under the latter title, had been exercised by her father and brother. *All the bishops* who were present in the upper house, *strenuously opposed this law!* and, as they possessed more learning than the temporal peers, they triumphed in the debate; but the majority of voices in that house, as well as in the commons, was against them. By this act, the crown *was vested with the whole spiritual power*, might repress all heresies, might establish or repeal all canons, might alter every point of discipline, and might ordain or abolish any religious rite or ceremony! In determining heresy, the sovereign was only limited (if that could be called a limitation) to such doctrines as had been adjudged heresy, by the *authority of Scripture*, by the first four general councils, or by any general council *which followed the Scripture as their rule* (a black swan!) or to such other doctrines as should hereafter be denominated heresy by the *Parliament* and convocation." This act "at once gave the crown alone

all the power which had formerly been claimed by the Popes, but which even these usurping prelates, had never been able fully to exercise, without some concurrence of the national clergy.”*

To the credit of the bishops, it should be mentioned, that all of them (fourteen in number) except the bishop of Landaff, refused to take the oath of supremacy, and were degraded from their sees. “But of the inferior clergy throughout all England, where there were ten thousand parishes, only eighty rectors and vicars, fifty prebendaries, fifteen heads of colleges, twelve archdeacons, and as many deans, sacrificed their livings to their religious principles. Those in high ecclesiastical stations being exposed to the eyes of the public, seem chiefly to have placed a point of honour in their perseverance; but on the whole, the Protestants, on the former change introduced by Mary, appear to have been much more rigid and conscientious.”†

Here then is another fatal break in the succession. The Anglicans will find much difficulty in tracing any of their orders even to Rome. The ghost of Elizabeth, their *founder*, will rise up before them, with the Act of Supremacy in one hand, and of Uniformity in the other—stamping with anger, and in a stern voice proclaiming—“My Lords Spiritual of England, I am your founder and head—from me you derive your ghostly power—these hands conferred on you the mitres and the keys,—will you now ungratefully disown your virgin mother?”

The constitution of the Church, as by law established, is then manifestly, a *human* thing—a *secular* institution—the work of *laymen*, and a woman! This fact is painfully felt by the Puseyites, as appears from their Tract “on Church and State,” from which a few extracts will be edifying to the reader, as avouching facts, which would not be so well received from a dissenter:—

“The appointment of all our bishops, and in much the

* Hume’s History of England, chap. xxxviii.—1 Eliz. cap. 1 and 2.

† Hume, chap. xxxviii.

greater number of instances, of those who are to undertake the cure of souls, is vested in the hands of individuals *irresponsible*, and, unpledged to any opinions, or any conduct, laymen, good or bad, as it may happen, *orthodox or heretic, faithful or infidel!* The bishops, every one of them, are, as a matter of fact, appointed by the prime minister for the time being, who, since the repeal of the Test Act, may be *an avowed Socinian, or an Atheist!* A very large proportion of other church benefices, carrying with them cure of souls, are likewise in the hands of the prime minister, or of the Lord Chancellor, and other lay patrons, who, like him, may be of any religion, or of no religion.

“It cannot be denied, that at present it (the church) is treated far more arbitrarily, and is more completely *at the mercy of the chance government of the day*, than even our forefathers were, under the worst tyranny of the worst times. Election, confirmation, consecration, instead of being rendered more efficient checks than formerly, are now so arranged as to offer the least possible hindrance to the most exceptionable appointments of a godless ministry. As to the election, the dean, and chapter, with whom it still formally rests, have only twelve days given them to inquire into the character of the person nominated, who may be an entire stranger to every one of them, or known through report most unfavourably. If they fail to elect in this time, *election* becomes unnecessary, and the crown *presents* without it. And now the dean and chapter have eight days given them, and the archbishop twenty, for reflection. If within these periods, the former fails to go through the form of election, and the latter to consecrate, both parties subject themselves to the pains and penalties of a *præmunire*; *i. e.* all their goods, ecclesiastical and personal, are liable to confiscation, *and themselves to imprisonment, till such time as they submit!* And thus, as the law now exists, we have actually no check on the appointment of a Socinian (if it so happen) or infidel minister.”*

* Tracts for the Times, No. 59.

Alas! that this should be the mournful condition of any Christian community. It is not in scorn, but sorrowfully and affectionately, I say to our brethren, the evangelical members of the church, what earthly endowments can be a compensation for the precious liberty thus sacrificed? Oh! why, ye freemen of Christ, do ye rest in silence, while your church, in her most spiritual interests, is thus "at the mercy of the chance government of the day?" And I would respectfully ask the advocates of Apostolic succession, Can that mysterious virtue which you claim as your exclusive property, come thus through the hands of a Socinian or an Infidel? Can it be the result or the companion of compulsory consecrations? How often must your archbishop lay hands on an unworthy head, to avoid going to prison, and being spoiled of all his goods? How many "heretics," like Hoadly, may thus be *forced* into the Apostolic chair; and then, what about *their* ordinations? Can a heretic convey the Holy Ghost? I appeal to your consciences. I ask you, in the sight of God, is this succession a safe foundation, on which to rest the whole credit of Christianity?

The Oxford writer proceeds:—"Again, with regard to the inferior patronage of the church, a large proportion of our benefices are, as has been already noticed, in the hands of laymen, who may be of any religion under heaven." Then after quoting the law of presentations from Blackstone, he adds, "The sum of the whole is then, that unless the bishop can prove to the satisfaction of a jury in a court of common law, that the person presented to him for institution has been guilty of some particular immoral act above the grade of *malum prohibitum*, or has maintained some opinion, such as shall come under the strict definition of heresy, he loses his cause; and then if he persist in his refusal, is liable to an action for damages, in which the judge informs us, 'the patron may recover ample satisfaction.'"

Again, as to discipline: every churchwarden, in every parish

in England, appears annually before the archdeacon, and “swears that he will present to the archdeacon the names of all such inhabitants of his parish as are leading notoriously immoral lives. This oath is regularly taken once a year by every churchwarden in every parish in England; yet I believe such a thing as any single presentation for notoriously immoral conduct, has scarcely been heard of for a century. So that it certainly seems, that, if within this last century, any *notoriously* immoral man has been residing in any parish in England, the churchwardens of that parish have been *perjured!*”*

How different—how happily different is it, with what high-churchmen contemptuously calls the schismatics! The promised presence of the Saviour, with any, is dependent on their retaining the truth, and acting according to it. He is with those who teach all things whatsoever he has commanded. Between real Protestant ministers and the Apostles, there is not a single link;—we take the law directly from inspired lips! We open the Bible, and expound the words of Christ to the people—and *He* speaks by us. We do not receive the grace of God through a series of tainted vessels, becoming more offensive as they descend;—we take the water of life fresh from the fountain, and will never admit that it requires to be *filtered* by a corporation of priests, arrogantly calling itself the church, before it is fit for the refreshment of God’s people! The Holy Ghost says,—“*Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.*” In passing through the wilderness down the tract of time, true believers “drink of that spiritual rock that FOLLOWS THEM; and that rock is CHRIST.”†

Some, however, are simple enough to argue, that even in an apostate church,—which they not only admit Rome to be, but zealously contend that she is,—everything may go right, as to matters of government and discipline, which is proved, they think, by the fact, that though the churches of Asia and

* Tracts, No. 59.

† 1 Cor. x. 4.

Galatia had erred, they were still denominated "churches" in Scripture. Now, granting, for argument sake, that those bodies had wholly apostatised from the faith, and preached another gospel,—the question is, would *their* ministers be true ministers of Jesus Christ, sent by him, and administering the sacraments with the accompanying energy of his Spirit, regenerating in baptism, and being "quite sure that they had the Lord's body to give to the people?"

Who can hesitate to answer this question in the negative? Will Christ remain, when his truth is gone?—Will he assist the builders who have laid *another foundation*?—Will he honour those who preach another gospel, and whom his most eminent Apostle commands us to hold "accursed?" If men turn away from the faith—preach destructive error—subvert the plan of salvation—obstruct the way to Heaven with their stumbling-blocks—virtually deny Christ—quench the Spirit—persecute the truth—shed the blood of the saints,—are they still a church in such a sense, that they can confer (what they have not) the grace of God?—can confer an authority to preach the gospel, which they disown—a power to forgive sins, while their *own* can hardly be forgiven, either in this world, or that which is to come? And what is the basis of a proposition fraught with such monstrous conclusions? Simply the fact, that erring congregations are still called congregations, or "churches." On the same principle, we might prove, that the withered branches which our Lord declares are fit only to be burned, may still *propagate* and bear fruit,—for, are they not still called "branches?"

CHAPTER VI.

HAVE THE CHRISTIAN PEOPLE A RIGHT TO CHOOSE THEIR OWN PASTORS ?

THOSE who answer in the negative, are wont to allege the fact, that the most special instructions as to the qualifications of ministers are given, not to the *churches*, but to Timothy and Titus, who were to ordain them. But this argument fails, by proving too much. How ?—Because similar instructions are given to the same parties concerning *deacons* ; and yet it is admitted by all, that *they* were chosen by their respective congregations. The fact, then, that these instructions were not addressed in the first instance to the people, proves nothing to the purpose.

Neither does it prove, that Timothy and Titus were authorised to force on a reluctant people, ministers, by whose gifts they could not be edified, and in whose character they could not confide, and whom, therefore, it was impossible for them “to esteem very highly in love, for their works’ sake.” Neither they nor Paul, in whose name they acted, ever thought of such a hateful lordship over God’s heritage. There is such a thing as ordination in non-episcopal churches ; they have colleges and universities, in which candidates are trained for the ministry. Every Presbyterian and Congregational pastor feels, that the direction to lay hands suddenly on no man, is addressed to him, and should be attended to, whenever a church,

through ignorance, or precipitancy, or party spirit, makes an unworthy choice. This practical *veto* is found generally sufficient as a check to prevent the abuse of a power which, though not wholly free from perversion, in any human hands, (what power is ?) seems more safely lodged with the *Christian* people, than with a lay patron, a bishop, or a presbytery.

But it may be asked,—If it be the office of presbyteries or associations of pastors, i. e. *bishops*, to ordain, how is it, that the instructions relating to it are given to Timothy and Titus, and not to such pastors? I answer, *first*—Timothy and Titus were the assistants or coadjutors of the Apostles, in the work of *organising or establishing the churches*;—they were sent by Paul to put things in order among the new converts, where he could not attend personally,—and when this was done in one place, they proceeded on the same errand to another. Thus, as “helps” to the Apostles, they formed stated congregations of believers, and ordained their chosen bishops by the laying on of hands. *Secondly*—In such a state of things, in the “*beginning* of the gospel,” it was impossible that the *presbyteries* could, in many places, perform the work of ordination, for this sufficient reason,—that presbyteries had as yet no existence.

But, did the “inferior clergy” ordain where the new church polity was already in force, and the societies were got into working order? Most assuredly they *did*!—And here we are supplied with an argument, *a fortiori*, in favour of non-episcopal ordination. Let the candid reader consider it well:—Timothy received the ministerial gift by the “laying on the hands of the *Presbytery*.” Now, exalt him as much as you please—make him an archbishop or a primate, if you will, as some of the fathers did four or five hundred years after his death!—still, all this high-priestly dignity was conveyed by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery! Nay, Paul himself did not disdain to receive a similar designation to a special mission, by the elders or appointed pastors at Antioch,

and that, too, by the express command of the Holy Ghost. Thus did these holy men, guided by the spirit of inspiration, honour the newly *constituted order* of the house of God,—like a wise governor of a colony, who abdicates the judicial chair, gives up his summary jurisdiction, as soon as the regular courts are established, and the proper administrators of justice are installed in their respective offices,—and, after that, sets the subjects an example of homage to the law, by submitting to it himself.

The elders then *ordained* men to the *episcopal* (*i. e.* pastoral) office; but did they appoint or choose them? and had the “laity” nothing to do but go to church, receive the sacraments, and pay their dues? Were the clergy of the primitive church a self-elected and irresponsible corporation? Had the people no more voice in the selection of their pastors than the “Catholic” laity of England? If this were the case, how could they perform the duties enjoined on them in Scripture? Let the reader take up his Bible and look at these duties again, for the subject is very important, and let him say whether they be compatible with passive obedience to the nominee of some extraneous party.

The pastor does not bear the relation of *father* to the people of Christ, except they chose to remain “children in understanding.” “Call no man your father upon earth—one is your father who is in heaven—one is your master, even Christ.” “Who art thou that judgest another’s servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth.” Let the whole 14th chapter to the Romans be read, in which is strongly vindicated the Christian’s responsibility to Christ alone, by whom he will be judged at last, without any shelter either from his ghostly fathers, or his god-fathers. James and Paul have been thought (erroneously) to be at variance on the subject of justification; but on the *independence of conscience*, and its direct responsibility to God, they are in unquestionable harmony. “There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy, who art

thou that judgest another?" Yes, my readers, ask your spiritual superiors *that*—ask them are they greater than James and Paul. If such Scriptures do not prove that Puseyite episcopal authority is a usurpation of the mastership of Christ, what proof can they yield for any doctrine? "I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say." Indeed! Is that Paul's style of addressing the laity? If he were a Catholic bishop, he would stand a fair chance of degradation, for allowing the people to think for themselves! Had he lived in the "perilous times," which he himself predicted, sacerdotal hands might have been imbrued in his blood, and his name have been pronounced with execration in the same list with Huss, Wickliffe, Luther, and Calvin. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." This is more of Paul's ultra-protestantism! Does not the proving of the doctrine imply the proving of the doctor? And wherefore prove him, if you cannot remove him? Is the body of sin and death to be bound upon the people indissolubly? When *means* are enjoined, an *end* is implied; and who would use the one, if there were no hope of obtaining the other? "Beloved, *try the spirits* whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world!" Now, wherefore try them, if there was no power to reject them? If a false prophet—that is a worthless minister—is sent to a parish by a lord or a bishop, must the sheep hear this stranger's voice, and follow him? If so, they are silly enough! *

Does not such language as I have quoted, and much more might be given in the same strain, lead us to the conclusion, that the Christian people—the laity—have judgments to prove and try their teachers—power to reject the evil, and hold fast the good? Are they not bound, in consequence, to exercise that power, as they shall answer to Christ at the last day? The rational, indeed, to a fair mind, the unavoidable presump-

* Matt. xxiii. 9; 10 Rom. xiv. 4; James iv. 12; 1 Thes. v. 21; 1 John iv. 1.

tion from these, and similar passages, is, that the Apostles designed the Christian congregations to have the choice of their own bishops; and to have some legitimate means of getting rid of the incompetent, or the unworthy. If an ill-taught, undisciplined, and factious people, sometimes exercise this power unjustly, rudely, oppressively, let them be punished for the abuse; but let not the whole Catholic Church be enslaved on their account! Popular violence is no argument for despotism. Let disorders be punished, but let rights be protected.

How is this presumption in favour of popular election borne out by Scriptural precedents? In what estimation were the "*laity*" held by the Apostles? That is a point worthy of serious examination. These men were inspired, and, of course, did not regard the mind of the multitude in any thing. An Apostle to consult the laity about church affairs! How a Catholic bishop's cheeks would redden with indignation at the very thought. Well, suppose *they* disregarded the opinions of the people, *uninspired* men would have no right to draw their conduct into a precedent for their own guidance. But that conduct was the very reverse of what we have supposed. Even in the "council" at Jerusalem (Acts xv.) the elders *and the brethren* were associated with the Apostles in issuing the decree; and on every important occasion, the said laity were assembled, and gave their voices in common with the Apostles and elders. Thus, the Holy Spirit *recognised*, and thereby *established*, the rights of the people.

You are aware, that they were called on by the Apostles to choose a successor to Judas. It is true, the office of an Apostle was different in many things from that of an ordinary pastor, but that consideration weighs heavily in the scale of popular rights. For, if the laity were allowed by the Apostles to meddle with matters so much above them—to assist in the appointment of an ambassador of Christ—nay, to choose two men out of their number, on one of whom the lot *must* fall, so that God was shut up to appoint either of them—if they could do this,

they were surely competent to elect the pastors that were to go in and out among their families! If they could choose an ambassador, they could surely choose a steward! If they could do the greater, they could do the less.

I am not certain, however, that the Apostles had the sanction of their Master in this proceeding. They should have waited till they were endued with power from on high, as they were commanded. Besides, it is the province of the king to select his own ambassador. And, from the subsequent silence in relation to this new Apostle, it would seem that the hasty proceeding was set aside. An apostle must have had a direct commission, and mission from Christ in person. There were to be "twelve Apostles of the Lamb." Paul took the place from which Judas, by transgression, fell; and gloriously did he fill up the vacancy. However this may be, one thing is plain (and this is my argument) namely, that the eleven Apostles, fully and unanimously, acknowledged the right of the *Christian laity to choose the very highest officers in the church*. This could never have been, if they had not learned from their Master, during the forty days sojourn among them after his resurrection, thus to respect the privileges of the people; and, if the sentiment of the church had not then been, that they were all *brethren*, having *power*, as well as property, in common. In regard to the former, that is the power, every thing in the state of the infant community, would have led us to suppose, that the founders would have *retained it in their own hands exclusively during their life*, supposing even that they meant to establish *a constitution the most popular* that can be imagined. But as they did *not*, but freely shared it with their followers, by what species of sophistry can any man draw the conclusion, that they meant to establish such a *despotic system* as the Puseyite episcopacy?

But this, though conclusive enough, is not the whole of the argument. The election of *deacons* was, confessedly, in the hands of the lay members of the church. This office, as at

first instituted, and as it exists among dissenters, concerns principally the temporal matters of the church; and, therefore, *we* cannot logically infer, from their being chosen by the people, that pastors should be chosen in like manner. But the precedent bears with irresistible force against the churches of Rome and England. In these communions, the *deacon* is a *clergyman*. A man becomes a deacon only as a preliminary step to his being made a priest; and his office as a deacon, is not to serve tables, or to attend to the poor, but to teach and preach. Here, then, is a syllogism, and I should like to see any high churchman who would deny either the premises or the conclusion:—

The Apostolic churches, with divine authority, choose their own deacons;

In the churches of Rome and England, the officer called a “deacon” is a *clergyman*;

Therefore, the Apostolic churches elected their own *clergy*, and modern churches not only *may*, but *must* do the same, in order to make good their claims. Moreover, as all bishops are made from priests, and all priests from deacons, and all deacons were chosen by the people, *therefore*, the whole hierarchy, if Apostolic, is based ultimately on the suffrages of the laity!

Catholic laymen! ponder this argument. Take up the question yourselves, and study it. Leave not so important a subject in the interested, though honest, hands of your ministers. Work out your own emancipation.

“Hereditary bondsmen, know ye not,

Who would be free, *themselves* must strike the blow?”

I might give a series of quotations from the Apostolic fathers, and their immediate successors, showing that the practice of the primitive congregations was in accordance with the principles which we have deduced from Scripture. In Asia, Africa, Europe,—East and West, FROM THE DAYS OF THE APOSTLES,

DOWN, FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS, ALL PASTORS, ALL BISHOPS, WERE CHOSEN BY THE PEOPLE! No one who has read a page of church history can deny this. The fact is notorious; and the man who would now controvert it, should be regarded either as contemptibly ignorant, or shamefully dishonest. The first missionaries of Christianity carried the democratical principle of church government with them into Britain, Ireland, and every country of Europe where they planted the banner of the cross, before the church was radically corrupted; and some smouldering embers of popular freedom remained in these islands, almost to the eve of the Reformation. And yet priests have so cunningly played on the people's credulity, that even now they applaud the system that denuded them of a *divine right*! They have allowed interested bodies of men to take away their talent, and bury it in the earth, or, rather, to trade with it, till they are worshipped for the riches that have grown so enormously from their fraud, and that by the very men whom they have defrauded! The people contend keenly for the recovery of their civil rights,—but to their *spiritual franchises* they are comparatively indifferent. They protest against civil despotism, as a great evil, and yet they hug their ecclesiastical chains, and bear the lash of the priest without a murmur. How long shall these things be?—Not very long! Will the Puseyites gain their darling church independency, by which they mean *ascendency*? Not without losing their church property. But, in that case, how could they maintain the *Apostolic* dignity by voluntary supplies? Do they know, that this is, indeed, not the Nicene age of the world—that we are living under free political institutions—that the mighty steam-engine, and the mightier press, are at work—that the people are educated, and are learning something of the church's and the world's history? Will these not think deeply and indignantly on such a passage as the following, from an authority which the highest as well as the lowest of them will respect?

“An archbishop or bishop is elected by the chapter of his

cathedral church, by virtue of a license from the crown. *Election* was, in very early times, the usual mode of elevation to the *episcopal chair, throughout all Christendom*; and (mark!) this was *promiscuously performed* by the LAITY, as well as the clergy; till at length, it becoming tumultuous, the emperors and other sovereigns of the respective kingdoms of Europe, *took the appointment*, in some degree, into their own hands, by reserving to themselves the right of confirming these elections, and of granting investiture of the temporalities, which *word* began almost universally to be annexed to this spiritual dignity,—without which confirmation and investiture, the elected bishop could neither be consecrated, nor receive any secular profits. This right was acknowledged in the emperor Charlemagne, A.D. 773, by Pope Hadrian I. and the council of Lateran, and universally exercised by other Christian princes; but the policy of the court of Rome (fatal policy!) at the same time began, by degrees, to *exclude the laity* from any share in these elections, and to confine them wholly to the clergy, which at length was completely effected,—the mere form of election, appearing to the people to be a thing of little consequence while the crown was in possession of an absolute negative, which was almost equivalent to a direct right of nomination. . . . But when, by length of time, the custom of making elections by the clergy only, was fully established, the Popes began to except to the usual method of granting these investitures, which was *per annulum et baculum*, by the prince's delivering to the prelate a ring, and a pastoral staff or crozier, pretending that this was an encroachment on the church's authority, and an attempt, by these symbols, to confer a spiritual jurisdiction: and Pope Gregory VII., toward the close of the eleventh century, published a bull of excommunication against all princes who should dare to confer investitures, and all prelates who should venture to receive them. This was a bold step towards effecting the plan then adopted by the Roman See, of rendering the clergy en-

tirely independent of the civil authority; and long and eager were the contests occasioned by this papal claim." *

In "very early times," then, that is during the purest ages of the church, even *bishops* were elected by the clergy and laity, promiscuously. Of course, when the laity elected the bishop, in common with the clergy, having always the majority of votes, they must have chosen the parish priest themselves, without any foreign control whatever. Indeed, at first, the *parish* was the name of the *bishop's* charge; but, in process of time, as converts were multiplied, and missionary stations grew up into regular self-sustaining congregations, the episcopal charge expanded into a *diocese*,—and the virtual superintendence, allowed by courtesy to his age, and wisdom, and popular talents, and, most of all, to the influence of his station, as chief pastor of the mother church in the province or district, was gradually claimed as a *right*, and ultimately exercised with irresponsible and despotic sway. Then arose metropolitans, primates, patriarchs, until at last the Pope appeared, as the apex of the ecclesiastical pyramid.

Observe, as Judge Blackstone truly remarks, the emperors usurped the right of confirming the election of the bishops on the pretext, that the elections had become tumultuous. It is true they had; but what was the cause? There were two principal causes. First, when the church was established, it was filled with mere formal professors and hypocrites. The people of the church—"the faithful"—now became the populace of the state; and as they were a mere worldly multitude for the most part, their proceedings were, of course, factious and disorderly. Indeed, they sometimes proceeded to the shedding of blood; and, the unpopular candidates and their friends, were obliged to fly from the sanctuary for their lives. The second cause is this:—The splendid "temporalities," the rank, and wealth, and civil power, which were "now annexed to the spiritual dignity," were so alluring to ambitious minds,

* Blackstone's Commentaries, B. 1, c. 2.

especially those connected with the aristocracy, that they moved heaven and earth to secure their election. If elections for members of parliament are often so tumultuous, what would be the case if the populace of London or Dublin assembled to choose a bishop?

First, the communion of the church was corrupted—Christian principle was swamped, by an influx of baptized heathenism and worldliness; then bishops became princes and judges, and vied with secular potentates in the splendour of their establishments—in their gorgeous equipages—in their sumptuous entertainments; then the great, the noble, the proud, filled episcopal chairs, and called themselves successors of the Apostles; then the people were excluded, and the sovereign conferred the ring and the crozier; and, lastly, the Pope in the eleventh century, the renowned Hildebrand, the Puseyite model of an ecclesiastical reformer,—extorted the ill-gotten treasure from the civil power, and ONE MAN grasped the rights and liberties of the Christian world! The bishops, however, divide with the aristocracy and the government the power of nominating the inferior clergy.

Thus were THE PEOPLE despoiled of their privileges. When will they awaken to demand their rights? All writers of Christian antiquity are unanimous in their testimony, that the *suffrages of the people* were essential to ordination. The rule of Vincent of Lerins, which certainly is applicable to no unwritten tradition, holds true in this case, as much as in the case of any doctrine of Christianity. The right of the laity to choose their pastors was held *ab omnibus, undique, semper*, by all, every where, and at all times, until it was seized on by the state. A man has as much right to sit and vote in the British House of Commons, without being elected by some constituency, as had the ancient bishops to teach, and preach, and rule in a congregation, without being chosen by that congregation. And, as the oaths taken, and the forms gone through by the former, do not confer the right, but only ascertain and recognise it; so the

act of ordination is but a solemn and public recognition of a power which comes from CHRIST *through his people* ; and of qualities mental, moral, and spiritual, which only the great Head of the church can bestow. Congregations may be deceived ; so may presbyteries and bishops. But the latter may have a veto, and, by refusing to ordain, may, when the occasion demands it, prevent abuse, and preserve the due order of the house of God.

John Knox utterly disowned the orders of the Church of Rome as antichristian. In matters of church government, he was far from being as rigid as some of his followers. When he was chosen by a Christian congregation in Geneva, he held that to be a sufficient call to the pastoral office in that place, and cared little about ceremonies. This noble superiority to forms—this fearless recognition of the spirituality of religion, characterised all the reformed churches that adhered to Calvin. Hence, Mosheim speaks of them as admitting a great latitude of opinion on minor matters, compared with the Lutheran churches ; and as labouring to embrace within their pale all the *real* Christians, while they severely censured immorality. A finer eulogy could not be pronounced on any Christian community. What a pity the Church of Scotland did not continue to deserve it ! That interesting church, however, is roused, and is doing a noble work. May it issue in the restitution to the people of their long lost rights ! This timely rising of the Scottish Kirk is an omen for good. They have taken the right side on the great question of the age. In the grand conflict between the rights of the laity and the pretensions of the clergy, the issue is no longer doubtful. In ancient times, priests gained every thing by their curses. Now they may ring their bells and quench their candles in vain : children will laugh at them. It is only by their artful appeals to party feeling and class interests, that they can now hope for success. But even here, they will soon be found out, and the old cry of “wolf” will be disregarded. Happy the church that falls in with the

designs of providence in the regeneration of the world ! Happy the clergy that sides with the people. The rest must have their portion with Babylon the great !

Whether it is possible for a church to be at once established and free, is a problem which the Church of Scotland is anxious to solve, and which God himself seems about to bring to the issue. There are many antichrists gone out into the church. EVERY PATRON IS AN ANTICHRIST !

Let the reader, who is not afraid to THINK, and who bows to the authority of the Bible, seriously reflect on the following questions :—

According to the New Testament, and the practice of the primitive church, was the FREE CHOICE OF THE LAITY essential to ordination ?—Does not the testimony of that antiquity, so idolised now-a-days, prove that it *was* ? If so, then, are the ordinations of parochial clergy, or bishops, (I exclude evangelists and missionaries), SCRIPTURAL and REGULAR ? How far do the subsequent, though unavoidable, consent and acquiescence of the congregations, constitute a *virtual call* ? Supposing the answers to these questions to be the most charitable, yet what a poor shelter for the hierarchies of modern times ! Are not all *patrons*, appointing ministers contrary to the will of the people, and forcing them on the flock of Christ,—(and whosoever offends *them* offends HIM ; and here, if anywhere, we may say,—*Vox populi, vox Dei*)—are not all such *patrons*, in the spiritual and the worst and most sacrilegious sense, really “*robbers of churches* ?” What, then, becomes of the so much vaunted succession ? Is there a minister in any church in Europe, who claims to have received the Holy Ghost through a *line of bishops* (or prelates—*rulers of pastors*—an office utterly unknown to the New Testament, to Apostles, or Apostolic Fathers), irrespective of the people’s choice—the suffrages of the faithful,—is there one such man *regularly ordained*, as a minister of Jesus Christ, according to *Scripture* and *primitive antiquity* ?—Validity, it is true, depends on the Head of the

church alone; but order depends on the church. It is thus that the appeal to antiquity can be turned, with tremendous effect, against the high church divines. Give the people a true history of Christianity for the first three centuries, and you overturn the whole fabric of church power.*

We have already seen, that soon after the establishment of the church, the emperors and kings claimed, and for hundreds of years *universally* exercised, a power tantamount to nomination. Without investiture with the ring and the crozier, by the *secular power*, not one of the bishops could be consecrated! Till the magic symbols were received from the hand of a *layman*—often a wicked man—the bishop elect was *not* a successor of the Apostles. That holy thing—that muffled, mysterious, unutterable, something, which no eye can see, and no hand can handle, muttering in the dark, but enabling its recipient to give the Holy Ghost,—did not take possession of the man of God, till the purpled prince of this world had put the ring on his finger, and the staff in his hand! Then, and not till then, he could bind and loose, as an Apostle! And whose Apostle was he?—Most unquestionably, the *emperor's*! His power came visibly, confessedly, *from the world*, and not from heaven. It was a thing of earth, bestowed often from sordid motives, as a reward for flattery—as a bribe for subserviency—as a retaining fee to the mitred advocate of a gigantic despotism, which wreaked to heaven with impurity and blood!

Oh, how high churchmen are infatuated!—How the laity are duped! The *jus divinum* in kings or priests has ever its counterpart in the subjugation and debasement of the people. They have dressed up an idol, shrouded it in gloom, and enthroned it in an awful shrine. The multitude stare, and tremble, and fall prostrate, adoring the invisible power. We pull away the solemn drapery—we enter the *sanctum sanctorum*, and let in the light of heaven upon the scene:

* Such a history is just published by the Rev. Dr. Bennet, of London, forming the Congregational Lecture for 1841.

and what do we find?—A log of wood daubed with paint, or a few dry human bones tied together with a ribbon! Thus, the Apostolical succession of the Puseyites—the great Diana of the Anglicans,—is not merely an absurdity, it is a cheat. It is a novelty—an innovation!—It is the result of a *revolution* of the primitive church—founded on spiritual robbery, and imperial usurpation, and was designed to entail perpetual bondage to *man*—on the ransomed freemen of JESUS CHRIST!

CHAPTER VII.

SCRIPTURAL BISHOPS AND CATHOLIC PRELATES.

WE have seen, then, with what little reason the hierarchical powers of modern times regard themselves as successors of the Apostles. The chair of Peter, "the blessed chieftain of a blessed company"—the last hope of the sinking Anglicans, has been shown to be a poor defence in their day of trouble, even if *they* had any right to seek its shelter, which they certainly have not, more than the boy *Jones* had to hide under one of the Queen's sofas. They are intruders in the Vatican, and if found there, they might make up their minds for a season of "durance vile."

I need not recapitulate my arguments on these points, nor dwell longer on the *difficulties* of Anglicanism. I might, indeed, write a chapter on the obscurities of ancient church history—on the absence, defects, or uncertainty of early church registers—on the *anarchy* of the middle ages, when the episcopate and the papacy were so often usurped by laymen, who had not a solitary qualification for the sacred office, except their sex—on the fifteen or twenty *schisms*, which rent the chair of Peter asunder, causing it to be spliced and mended, till it is now as difficult to discover the true wood of which it was originally made, as it is to trace the primitive cloth of an Irish beggar's great coat—on the *anti-popes* that roamed

through Europe, dividing the allegiance of the faithful by their apostolical pretensions, oppressing the nations by their endless exactions, and debauching society by their vices; on the relentless *persecution*, which never allowed its hungry sword to sleep in the scabbard, from Gregory I. to Hildebrand, and from Hildebrand to Leo—*persecution*, which has stamped the red mark of the beast on the “Catholic Church”—a mark which all the waters of Jordan cannot wash out, and which damns the wearer to everlasting infamy!

Having shown, however, that no claim to infallibility, or *inerrancy*, as the Anglicans with Roman policy euphonescally call it, can be built either on the Apostolic succession of the *bishops*, or on the official supremacy of *Peter*, it remains to see, whether the *CLERGY*, simply as such, possess an authority which can never err, and a domination which should never be resisted. For, however humiliating may be the thought to some of them—especially such as wear mitres, lawn sleeves, and aprons—they must make up their minds to stand on this low ground, and plead their cause as *mere presbyters*; for this is the only rank assigned them in the court of Scripture, and of antiquity. Whether Apostles, or early Fathers, preside on the seat of judgment, it matters little—high churchmen are non-suited by both.

* THE SCRIPTURAL BISHOP is a presbyter, and nothing more. This will appear from a brief reference to the passages where the name occurs. In what light did Paul regard the episcopal office? We are told, that from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the “*elders*” of the church in that city, and exhorted them among other things to take heed to the flock, of which the Holy Ghost had made them “*overseers*” (ἐπισκοποι, *bishops*.)^{*} From this passage it is evident:—1st. That elders and bishops are words used synonymously to designate the same class of church officers. 2ndly. It is clear that there were *several* of them in the single congregation at Ephesus; but

* Acts xx. 17—28.

there can not be even two prelates in the same diocese, much less in the same parish, unless one of them is superannuated, and requires a coadjutor. 3rdly. They are exhorted to feed "*the church*," which Christ has purchased with his blood, expressly distinguishing the clergy from the laity, and calling the *latter*, and *not* the former, **THE CHURCH!** Hence, when a man is commanded to "hear the church," he is commanded to hear the laity as well as the clergy—the latter being *their* organs and officers—their "servants for Jesus' sake." When the clergy say, "*we* are the church," they remind us of the absolute monarch of France haughtily exclaiming, "*I* am the state!"

When Paul writes to the church at Philippi,* he addresses "all the saints," "*with* the bishops and deacons." Now, as there were *bishops* (more than one) in the congregation at Philippi, they were certainly not *prelates*, but elders. And if there had been in that city a single gentleman with a mitre on his head, and a crozier in his hand, it is unaccountably strange, that Paul, the founder of his church, had no salutations for *him*!—that the head of the body was forgotten, or overlooked, by one who had the care of all the churches! Does the Pope, or his mimics, ever address the faithful but through their bishops?

Again, when Paul gives directions about the qualifications of church officers,† he mentions only two—*bishops* and *deacons*. Why be so particular about the deacon—the man of lowest rank, and least responsible duties—and say nothing about the elder, pastor, or priest? There can be but one rational answer given to this question, and that is, "bishop" is but another name for "elder," which is the highest rank in the Christian ministry.

This is rendered quite indisputable by the parallel passage in Titus:‡ "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain *elders* in every city, as I had appointed thee. . . . For a

* Phil. i. 1.

† 1 Tim. iii. 2—12.

‡ Tit. i. 5.

bishop must be blameless as the steward of God." The man who denies that "elder" and "bishop" are here used synonymously, is a man who *will* not see; and is, therefore, not to be reasoned with. Observe, that Titus had been "*left*"* in Crete to *organise* the churches in the several cities, and was, when that temporary work was done, to join the Apostle elsewhere; therefore, he had not been consecrated or appointed as its bishop, but merely *left* for a certain purpose, after which he hastened forward to "do the work of an evangelist."

If it be urged, that the Hebrews† are commanded to *obey* them that have the rule over them, and to submit themselves, because the rulers watched for their souls: I reply, that this obedience and submission are on the same authority, and for the same reason, claimed for the *elders*. For instance, "Let the elders that *rule well* be counted worthy of *double honour*, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine."‡

The identity of the bishop and elder is further most satisfactorily established by Peter, as follows:—"The *elders* which are among you, I exhort, who am also an elder, . . . *feed the flock* of God which is among you, *overseeing it*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being *lords* over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock."§ The word translated "taking the oversight," does not mean, *assuming* the episcopal office, but discharging it. The reader of the original will see at once, that the "elders" are represented as doing the work of bishops, and that they are cautioned against the *original sin* of the clergy, namely, *lording* it over God's heritage. This word "heritage," means literally *clergy* (κληρος); so that, in fact, the *people*, and not the *priests*, are God's clergy, although the latter very early monopolised this name, in allusion to the tribe of Levi, which was called God's inheritance. If it be

* Surely this word does not imply permanent residence as a diocesan, but something quite different.

† Heb. xiii. 17.

‡ 1 Tim. v. 17.

§ 1 Peter v. 1—3.

replied, that the higher office includes the lower,—that bishops may be called elders, in a loose way, as Peter, though an Apostle, calls himself one,—my conclusive answer is ready, and I have not travelled from this very text to find it. The heritage here spoken of, is the same as “the flock of God,” twice mentioned—the flock which the bishops or elders were to feed and oversee;—this flock is, unquestionably, the *people* of God,—and, therefore, those who were to feed *it*, could not be pastors of priests,—that is, they could not be diocesan bishops.

As to the “*angels*” of the churches, mentioned in the book of Revelation, which are sometimes claimed as bishops, by high church writers, I know not well how to reply to such an argument. It is strange, when men are driven from the open, solid ground of Scripture history, and the Apostolic constitution of the church, that they should seek a defence in a book of mystical and prophetic symbols! Let it suffice to remark, that, where there was a plurality of bishops, as was the case in the Asiatic churches, order would require that one should preside, either by rotation, or permanently;—and, in this latter case, precedence would naturally be conceded to the oldest, wisest, or most talented member of the episcopal presbytery,—*not* by right of office, but by courtesy—not as lord over inferiors, but only as first among equals; like the chairman of a committee, such a person would be the organ of communication with the body, and would be called the “angel of the congregation,” according to the custom of the synagogue, which the converted Jews would readily adopt, and perfectly understand. Had the word angel been *translated*, as it means, simply, a “*messenger*,” much of the difficulty would be removed. Might the messengers of the churches be a *bishop* from each, waiting on John for advice: as the bishops of several churches waited on Ignatius, on his way to martyrdom, and took letters from him to their respective churches? This would then be a case in point. At all events,

we cannot for a moment suppose, that the use of this title by John would set aside a constitution established by the Holy Spirit; for HE had, unquestionably, appointed *several bishops* in the church, or rather congregation, at Ephesus, when Paul sent for them to Miletus, as already noticed.

So much for the testimony of Scripture; we now turn for a moment to the Fathers, whom we shall consult merely as witnesses, as to matters of fact, which they had an opportunity of knowing, and as to their own opinions on the point in question; and if *they* are against Catholic churchmen, surely they should, in all decency, be silent.

Clement of Rome says, "The Apostles, knowing by Jesus Christ, that contentions would arise about the name, or on the account of the episcopate, or oversight of the church, constituted bishops and deacons,"—the very words of Paul to the Philippians. He also uses the names presbyter and bishop to denote the same office. Jerome says that a presbyter is the same as a bishop; and that, originally, the churches were governed by the joint-council of the presbyters. Again, "Let the bishops know, that they are greater than the presbyters, rather by custom, than by the real appointment of the Lord." "Among the ancients, presbyters and bishops were the same." Jerome flourished in the fourth century. Polycarp, in his epistle to the Philippians, says—"Wherefore you must be subject to the presbyters and deacons,"—calling those officers presbyters which Paul, in his epistle to the same church, had called bishops. Tertullian, referring to the ordinances of worship, and the government of the church, says—"In all these things, certain approved elders preside." Irenæus, addressing the heretics of that age, says—"We challenge them to show, that tradition, which was transmitted from the Apostles, by a succession of presbyters." Again, "It behoves us to hearken to those who are *presbyters* in the church, *who*, as we have shown, have their *succession* from the Apostles, who, together with the succession of the *episcopate*, have received the certain

gifts of the truth." Bishop Stillingfleet, remarking on this passage, says—"What strange confusion must this raise in any one's mind, who seeks for a succession of episcopal power over presbyters from the Apostles, by the testimony of Irenæus, when he so plainly attributes both the succession to the presbyters, and the episcopacy, too, of which he speaks." Firmilian, bishop of Cesarea, says, that "in elders is vested the power of baptising, imposition of hands, and *ordinations*." Hilary says, "the presbyters were at first called bishops." Theodoret states, that, "of old, they called the same men both bishops and presbyters." Jerome testifies, that "the presbyters of Alexandria *ordained their bishop* for more than two hundred years, from the first planting of that church." Even the testimony of Ignatius, were his writings certainly genuine, is alleged in vain in favour of *diocesan* episcopacy. The bishop of whom he speaks, is *the pastor of a single congregation*,—the *preacher* as well as the ruler of that congregation. He exhorts Polycarp to preach, to see that the widows are not neglected, to know all his parishioners, even the servants, by name, and to inspect, at least, every marriage;—rather too much work for a diocesan lord! In his epistle to the church at Magnesia, he speaks of their bishops in the plural number.

Dr. Whitby, with many other eminent and zealous Episcopalians, admits, he "can find nothing in any writer of the first *three centuries*, concerning the episcopate of Timothy and Titus, nor any intimation that they bore that name." Had they been archbishops or primates, there can be no question, that the history of the first three ages would abound with allusions to them. Their successors, especially, would not willingly let the memory of their government die. They were evangelists, and, as such, their work was incompatible with that of a bishop. The celebrated Hooker, in his Ecclesiastical Polity, says—"The necessity of polity and regimen in all churches may be believed, without holding any one certain

form to be necessary in them all. And the general principles are such as do not particularly describe any one; but sundry forms of discipline may be equally consistent with the general maxims of Scripture." This "judicious" churchman did not believe modern episcopacy to be necessary to the unity of the Church, still less to the existence of it. To this agree Stillingfleet, and many other eminent English divines. Dr. Reynolds, Divinity Professor in Oxford, declares, that all ministers, whether entitled bishops or priests, have equal power and authority by God's word; and this he asserts to have been the common judgment of the reformed churches of his day. Dr. Holland, another professor of divinity at Oxford, says, that "to affirm the office of bishop to be different from that of presbyter, and superior to it, is most false,—contrary to Scripture, to the fathers, to the doctrines of the Church of England, yea, to the very schoolmen themselves." *

I shall only add the testimony of eminent historians, three of them English episcopalians. Mosheim says—"The rulers of the church were called either *presbyters* or *bishops*, which two titles are, in the New Testament, undoubtedly applied to the same order of men." † Even the writers of the *Oxford Tracts* admit, that bishop and elder are synonymous in Scripture. Milner's testimony is to the same effect:—"At first, indeed, or for some time, church governors were only of two ranks—presbyters and deacons. . . . The term bishop was confounded with that of presbyter." ‡

Dr. Hinds remarks:—"At the very period on which we are now dwelling, it is obvious that the term bishop and presbyter were not only applied to the same order, but that no order of ministers (setting aside the Apostles) was generally established superior to the presbytery. At a later period in the Apostolical history, the same assertion would be altogether

* Dwight's Theol., Sermon. 151.

† Eccl. Hist. cent. c. 2.

‡ Ch. Hist. cent. 2, ch. 1.

untenable.”* The latter part of this statement the accomplished writer has failed altogether to substantiate. He indulges his imagination in building up something like the English hierarchy, resting it principally on Timothy and Titus, on the “Angels” of Asia, and even on the shoulders of the Apostles, taking the assertion of Ambrose, that the primitive bishops—(modest men!)—were first called apostles, but laid aside the title from humility. Dr. Hinds, however, adds what is more to the point:—“At the period of Paul’s summons to the church of Ephesus, no such order of prelates could have existed there; and if not in so large and important a church, probably no where. The *title* cannot imply it, for it is one used for all the presbyters of Ephesus; and their number proves that he was not addressing bishops, for they came from one church. Again, although the word elsewhere occurs in Paul’s epistles, it cannot intend one chief governor of any church, because his epistles are addressed to the churches, as to *assemblies in whom ALL the authority was vested.*”†

Here is a concession to the laity worth having from such a quarter! We shall now quote from one of the brightest ornaments of the Church of England, the present dean of Durham; a dignitary of whom she may be justly proud. Would that all were like him! However, in his zeal for episcopacy, he confounds bishop, the pastor of a single congregation, with prelate, the ruler of a diocese. If not, why say that the primitive churches “adopted the episcopal form of church government,” when he states himself, only two pages forward, that “the *choice* of a successor (to the bishop) devolved on the *members of the society?*” “In this election (he adds) the *people* had an equal share with the presbyters and inferior clergy, without exception or distinction; and it is clear, that *their right* in this matter was not barely testimonial, but *judicial* and *elective*. This appointment was *final*, requiring no confirmation from

* Early Progress of Christianity, vol. i. p. 347.

† Vol. i. p. 350.

the civil power, or any superior prelate; and thus, in the management of its internal affairs, *every church (congregation)* was *essentially independent of every other.*" If this be episcopacy, we can only wish that every church in the empire may become episcopalian! However, we return to the matter at issue, namely, the identity of the bishop and elder. "It is also true, that in the earliest government of the first Christian society, that of Jerusalem, not the elders only, but the '*whole church,*' were associated with the Apostles; and it is even certain, that the terms bishop and elder, or presbyter, were, in the first instance, and for a short period, sometimes used synonymously, and indiscriminately applied to the same order in the ministry." *

Dean Waddington would intimate in this passage, that though the people were thus associated with the Apostles in the "earliest government," they were not to be associated with bishops in the *latest*. Now, I would ask him respectfully, is that the most "natural" conclusion? I should rather say, the reverse is far more natural. If inspired Apostles allowed the laity to be associated with them in the most important proceedings of church government, why should not their uninspired successors do the same? Are bishops better, higher, more dignified and exclusive, than Apostles? None will venture to *say* so; but it is clear enough that they are far more hostile to the rights of the Christian people, for there is scarcely one with which Apostles invested them, that they have not been stripped of by prelates.

The following extracts are from Neander, the celebrated German historian, than whom there is no higher authority on the state of the primitive church:—"The name of presbyter, by which, as we before remarked, this office was first distinguished, was transferred from the Jewish synagogue to the Christian church. . . . It is certain, that every church was governed by a union of the elders, or overseers, chosen

* Hist. of the Church, p. 21—23.

from among themselves; and we find among them no individual distinguished above the rest, who presides as a *primus inter pares*, though, probably, in the age immediately succeeding the Apostolic, of which we have unfortunately so few authentic memorials, the practice was introduced of applying to such an one the name of *ἐπισκοπος* by way of distinction.

“The whole church at Jerusalem took part in the deliberations, respecting the relation of the Jewish and Gentile Christians to each other; and the epistle drawn up after these deliberations, was likewise in the name of the whole church. The epistles of the Apostle Paul, which treat of various controverted ecclesiastical matters, are addressed to whole churches; and he assumes, that the decision belonged to the whole body. Had it been otherwise, he would have addressed his instructions and advices personally, at least *to the overseers of the church.*”

Unquestionably, had Paul meant to inculcate church principles, or to exemplify them in his own conduct, he would have addressed his “deputies and successors,” and not the laity! “Also, when discoursing of the settlement of litigations, the Apostle does not affirm, that it properly belonged to the overseers of the church; for if this had been the prevalent custom, he would no doubt have referred to it; but what he says seems to imply, that it was usual in particular instances to select arbitrators from among the members of the church.” (1 Cor. vi. 5.)*

“The manner in which Paul was wont to address himself to the whole church, and to take into account the co-operation of the whole community, which must be apparent to every one on reading his epistles, leads us to expect, that where a church was already established, he would admit it as a party in their common concerns. It is possible that the Apostle himself, in many cases, as on the founding of a new church, might think

* History of the planting &c. of the Church, vol. i. p. 167—170.

it advisable to nominate the persons best fitted for such offices; and a proposal from such a quarter would naturally carry the greatest weight with it. In the example of the family of Stephanas at Corinth, we see that those who first undertook office in the church, were members of the family first converted in that city." *

* Ibid, vol. i. p. 181.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON HEARING THE CHURCH.

EVEN under the Jewish economy, ritual and rigid as it was, there was no such proud repulsion of the laity, as they experience from our modern priests. Take a sample or two of this liberal spirit, so characteristic of true religion, and of *genuine* authority :—" And there rose a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp. And Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his young men, answered and said, my lord, Moses, forbid them. And Moses said unto him, *enviest* thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!"* There was a truly noble-minded man! What a different reception officious persons receive in these days, when detecting some breach of canon-law,—they run to the palace, and say, "my Lord Bishop forbid them!" In our days, when prophets multiply, "the church is in danger;" and when the Lord's Spirit is poured out on the laity, she is like an old leather bottle full of new wine, in hazard of bursting.

True, if men publish falsehood in the name of God, and put "Thus saith the Lord" to their own dreams, they cannot ex-

* Numbers, xi. 29, &c.

pect a blessing; for the Author of truth sends no man to deliver falsehood. But the want of a commission cannot nullify the truth:—"I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran—I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied; but, *if* they had stood in my counsel, and *caused my people to hear my words, then they* should have turned them from the evil way, and from the evil of their doings."* What more could be done by Aaron himself? The great thing, then, is to stand in the counsel of God, and to cause the people to hear *His* words. If even the *unsent* do this, they will not labour in vain; and, if the most eminent Apostle did it *not*, what would his commission avail? The anointing oil of an iniquitous priest, instead of sanctifying vice or falsehood, but cries to Heaven for heavier vengeance. Judas was *sent*, and yet he betrayed his Master; and, it is to be feared, none of the Apostles has had so many successors. Mitred Judases—right reverend traitors—have crowded round the altar, and imitated their father in every thing but his remorse, and his restitution of ill-gotten money.

The narrow mind of the Apostles, in their half-blind and bigotted state, ere the power had descended upon them from on high, and not the magnanimous spirit of their Master, seems to have always animated high churchmen,—for what they are now, they have been since the beginning of their reign! Of this bad spirit, we have an instructive instance recorded in the Gospel by Mark:—"And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and *we forbid him, because he followeth not us*. But Jesus said, Forbid him *not*: for there is no man that shall do a miracle in my name that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part."† Then follow cautions against giving offence to one of those "little ones" that believe in Christ, accompanied by reiterated and most awful descriptions of that doom to which such offences

* Jer. xxiii., 21, 22.

† Mark, ix., 38.

tend,—a passage which should excite the most serious alarm in the breasts of those who despise, denounce, and malign the faithful servants of Christ, because they follow not them,—that is, do not belong to their church.

In the Acts, we read that Saul “made havoc of the *church*, (not the clergy, mind,) entering into every house, and haling men *and women*, committed them to prison. *Therefore*, they that were scattered abroad went every where, *preaching the word.*” * Surely many of these preachers were laymen ! Such was Apollos, the Alexandrian, an eloquent man, mighty in the Scriptures, and fervent in spirit, who, when he came to Ephesus, “spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.” Nay, he went farther, and spake boldly *in the synagogue*, and he mightily convinced the Jews, and that *publicly*, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah. † Truly the spirit of this Divine narrative, so free and generous, is very different from the narrow, jealous, exclusive despotism of high churchmen, who have done little else since they came into the world but making money for themselves, and manacles for church. They have converted that hateful thing, which they misname *discipline*, into a cross on which spiritual Christianity has been nailed ; and when they hear of a revival of religion, they are panic-struck, like those who murdered the Lord of life, and put a seal on his tomb, when informed that he had risen.

The sinful deference paid by church divines to the arbitrary will of princes, has been most detrimental to true religion. In the translation of the Old Testament, the word corresponding to “church” in the New, is *congregation*. This is manifestly the proper translation of *ecclesia*, which means an assembly,—and, in the Christian use of it, denotes a number of believers accustomed to worship in one place. The King compelled the translators to retain in the New Testament

* Acts, viii. 4, &c.

† Acts, xviii. 24, &c.

the "old ecclesiastical words,"—consecrated by superstition. Hence, as Acts vii. 38, is the only place in the Bible where the Jewish nation is called a *church*, so the word congregation is never once used in the New Testament. Wherever it ought to be, we have the old Catholic word "*church*," which has done very much indeed to perplex controversy, and mislead the people. I will venture to assert, that the notion so prevalent, that the *church* and the *clergy* are identical, never could have gained ground, but for this faithlessness in our translators. Suppose we had read, "To the *congregation* of God which is at Corinth,"—"on this rock I will build my *congregation*,"—"if any man will not hear the *congregation*, let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican," would it not be plain as daylight to the most illiterate, that in all these cases the laity were referred to principally? Had it been translated, as it should have been, "Go, tell the congregation," would it be possible to gull the people with the notion, that the party to be told was a bishop, or a pope, or a council, or some terrific shadow of an unseen power, called "*THE CHURCH*,"—reigning some where between heaven and hell, and invoked by the clergy to frighten their dupes,—just as the master of a ribbon lodge tells his blind and phrenzied associates in crime, that he is acting on orders from the "higher powers,"—the nature of those powers being involved in the blackest mystery? It is true, however, that the people should open their eyes. Let them read the New Testament, and whenever they meet the word church, translate it "congregation." They will then find, that every command to hear the "church," is, in truth, a command to hear the people! If the church be infallible, the laity must be infallible, for, scripturally speaking, they are one and the same.

Certain prophecies in the Old Testament, regarding David and his throne, as typical of Christ and his kingdom, are sometimes brought forward as proofs of infallibility. But, what do they prove?—They prove the wide extension, prosperity, tri-

umph, and perpetuity of a dominion, which consists in righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Spirit. They prove, that the kingdom of Christ will be extended from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same—that it will exist as long as the sun and moon endure—and that its subjects will be countless as the sand on the sea shore, or the dew drops that sparkle in the morning beams, all over the green surface of our globe. Who are they which constitute this everlasting kingdom?—who can claim the promises of safety, victory, perpetuity, or, if you will, infallibility? Do these promises belong to the clergy only?—No; they belong to all who are justified by faith, born of the Spirit, and adopted into the family of God. It is not as *ministers*, but as “*saints*”—not as rulers of the church, but as subjects of the Saviour, that they should expect to enjoy the promised blessings of that kingdom which can never be moved.

There is not a single promise in Scripture to councils of clergymen! The church as a body of clergy, empowered to decide controversies in religion, is a thing utterly unknown to the Bible, and utterly repugnant to the Gospel. The sacred writers had no more conception of any such body, than they had of the spinning-jenny, except as connected with the apostacy. General Councils have no more right to decide dogmatically on articles of faith, than particular congregations. In fact, God has appointed no human tribunal for the decision of religious controversies. He himself decides all controversies by his word: beyond it, there is no infallible authority—no power standing between it and the conscience—no medium by which its light is unerringly conducted to other minds. If parts of it are obscure, it is His will that they should be so; and there is no remedy, but an additional revelation. The power that made the law, and that alone, can issue the explanatory statute, which then becomes a part of the code. Can the clergy mend the legislation of the Holy Spirit? How can those think so, who admit, that the clergy,

in whatever form they may meet and act, are destitute of *inspiration*? The Church of Rome is consistent, and claims a continuous stream of inspiration to guide her law-makers. We shall see whether those claims are founded either on Scripture or common sense. If they *are*, the Reformation was a fearful rebellion against God: and all the struggles for religious freedom in the dark ages were instigated by Satan, and justly anathematised. But if "the supreme JUDGE, by which *all* controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the HOLY SPIRIT speaking in the Scripture," * then is the supposed legislative power of the Church of Rome a daring and blasphemous assumption. Yet, paradoxical as it may appear, in this very assumption, there is far more knowledge of human nature, and far more regard to the moral principles by which it is guided in religious matters, than have ever been evinced by Protestants, in their indirect and shuffling attempts to bind the conscience. Rome knows well, that man is prone to revolt from any authority in religion which he does not consider *divine*,—and therefore she claims to be unerring and unchangeable as God. The Puseyites are working into the same path, and feeling the necessity of standing on the same ground. But, naked, Protestant Church-authority,—at once demanding obedience, and confessing fallibility,—enforcing, with pains and penalties, submission to decisions, possibly erroneous, is such a manifest usurpation, such an upstart, vulgar tyranny, and depends so palpably on secular force, and management, and seduction, for its existence,—that every ingenuous mind, as well as every enlightened conscience, repudiates it with mingled indignation and disgust. This glaring inconsistency greatly hindered the progress of the Reformation. That glorious event has been justly called a religious revolution, an insurrection of the hu-

* Westminster Confession of Faith, c. 1, s. 10.

man mind against spiritual despotism. But when those who led it from a cruel captivity—the very men who, under God, achieved its emancipation, and prostrated the power of its oppressor—so far forgot their mission, as to attempt to subject it to fresh manacles;—it was as if Moses had made bondsmen of the Israelites in the desert, and played the tyrant like Pharaoh, so far as a novel, petty, fickle, perfidious power can imitate a gigantic one, ruling its slaves on fixed principles from time immemorial.

The yoke of Christ is easy, and his burden light. It is *freely* assumed, and, therefore, cheerfully borne. It is of such a nature that it never can be imposed by human power, nor worn by compulsion. A man must take up the cross *himself* voluntarily—no church can bind it on him, though he may be saddled with its miserable counterfeit—a crucifix. A “creed” is no better than a crucifix. In fact, it is just the same kind of thing in its own way, and involves a perversion of sacred subjects nearly as gross. We fancy that we can *make* men believe the Gospel where God has failed to do it, forgetting that they shall be willing only in the day of *his* power, and that his ways are not as our ways. Men abuse their liberty of thought, and forthwith we get into a ferment of alarm, as if the sovereign of mind, and the searcher of hearts, had a slumbering eye, a heavy ear, and a shortened arm; and, lest chaos should come again, we run forth with our articles, our liturgies, our canons, and our oaths! It were as rational to assume the government of the atmosphere, in order to avert storms—to restrain the action of electricity, lest the nervous should be shocked by claps of thunder! When will men cease to meddle with matters too high for them? Can you make it rain according to the Rubric?

Against *what* is it said that the gates of hell shall not prevail? The clergy? No; the church, the congregation, which, as is quite evident from all the passages that liken it to a human body, a tree, or a building, consists neither of dogmas

nor forms, neither of creeds nor liturgies, neither of conciliar decrees, nor papal bulls, nor acts of parliament, nor church courts, nor cathedrals, nor tithes—but simply of *Christian men and women*—disciples of Jesus—*believers*. In this *ecclesiastical* building—this *congregational* temple,* the clergy have no place, *as such*. Here *all* are priests, and all are kings. The chief place, indeed, next to CHRIST, who singly sustains the whole structure, is assigned to Apostles and Prophets—first in the order of time, and first in rank; but the ordinary pastors of the church are neither the one nor the other. Against this church, which we see is neither sacerdotal nor clerical, but composed of *holy laity*,† the gates of hell shall not prevail. By the gates of hell, we are to understand the power of persecution; though it were to rage even unto *death*, it cannot destroy this building, for it is founded upon a rock—the Rock of Ages. Be it observed again, that this church, or congregation—the general assembly and church of the first born—is not a system of doctrines, nor a system of polity—not a hierarchy nor a synod—but simply the believing people—“*the people of God*.” Those who look for substantial, as well as verbal parallels, will find one in the 10th of John—“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and *they shall never perish*; neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”‡ This is precisely the same promise couched under a different similitude. In Matt. xvi. the people of God are living stones, here they are purchased and obedient sheep. The references in the margin of your Bible, will direct you to a multitude of similar promises, which the clergy will not have the hardihood

* See and compare 1 Cor. iii. 9—17; Eph. ii. 20, &c.; 1 Pet. ii. 4—7.

† It is said, that certain high churchmen of the middle class derived *laity* from λααζ, a stone, denoting a stupid, passive, insensible thing, fit only to be trampled on! But even of such God could make children of Abraham. However, it comes from λαος, *people*.

‡ John x. 27, 28.

to confine to themselves, and which guarantee eternal security to all the faithful. *Whosoever* believeth in Christ shall not perish, but have eternal life. "And this is the will of him that sent me, that *every one* that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day." The Lord "*forsaketh not his saints* ; they are *preserved* for ever." "They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which *cannot be moved*, but abideth for ever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about *his people*," (*the laity*) &c. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus," &c. "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." "Ye are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto eternal salvation."* Passages of this kind might be multiplied to any extent. And what do they all prove? Just this, that the *people* of God—not the clergy only—shall be preserved amidst all dangers, and from all enemies, unto eternal life; that *they* shall never perish; that no weapon formed against them shall prosper; and that every tongue that riseth against them in judgment shall be condemned. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died—yea, rather that is risen again, and ever liveth to make intercession for them. These promises are the precious legacy of the universal church—of all the righteous in the world; and they are all explanatory of the controverted text in Matthew, over which the word "church" has cast such a veil of mystery. Against the CONGREGATION OF CHRIST the gates of hell shall not prevail! How dare any self-constituted corporation of self-consecrated priests attempt to monopolise this promise, and exclaim, "The

* John iii. 15, and vi. 40; Ps. xxxvii. 28, and cxxv. 1, 2; Isa. xlv. 17; Romans viii. 29, &c.

temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we! *We* are the church, and against *us* the gates of hell shall not prevail!"

The "power of the keys" is reserved for a separate discussion. But we must advert here for a moment to the 18th Matthew:—"If thy brother *trespass against thee*, go and tell him his fault between him and thee alone, &c. . . . tell the church," &c.

1. Here is no question of doctrine, no heresy or schism—it is merely a matter of offence between one brother and another; a question which may be settled finally between themselves alone.

2. Therefore, it is a thing which, in the present state of society, must be of almost daily occurrence; it is a fault, and the best of men are prone to faults: "the just man falleth seven times a day, and riseth again." And if such a fault as that mentioned in the text should be committed, seventy times seven, it should be at once forgiven, if the offending party comes and says, I repent.*

3. From this it is clear, that the tribunal to which the last appeal is to be made, should be co-extensive with the church universal. Wherever Christians are, *there* should be the party by which the matter is to be settled; otherwise it could not afford a remedy to injured persons for an ever-recurring evil. A man cannot *tell* a church that is not accessible; nor can he be condemned for not *hearing* a body whose voice cannot reach him. Now, we are told, that the tribunal in question is *living*, and *speaking*, and *sovereign*, as well as *infallible*. What is this wonderful power, which is to adjust all *personal* differences that may occur among Christians on the face of the earth? Such humble and dependent men as curates being *hors de combat*, or rather out of the chair of authority, we turn first to the rector or parish priest. He *lives* and *speaks*; but unhappily

* Matthew xviii. 22.

he is neither sovereign nor infallible. He is subject to his bishop, bound under authority by solemn oaths; and is liable to err and commit crime, and to be deposed from his office. The priest is not infallible; no one pretends that he is; nor is he the church. If he were, each parish would be a sovereign principality, and infallibility would resemble the Lord's body in the eucharist; for as each fragment of the host contains "whole Christ," so each of the hundreds of thousands of parishes would contain a whole infallibility; and yet there would not be myriads of infallibilities, but only one infallibility!

The bishop does not come much nearer to infallibility than the priest. He has greater power, but no greater security against error. We have seen that his claim to bestow the Holy Ghost, as if the eternal Spirit were only a tame dove, is worse than a silly presumption. Besides, his lordship may be unmitred by a higher power. And being but a single member of the episcopal body—but one-thirtieth, or one-hundreth, or one-thousandth part of the whole infallible corps, he cannot be called *the church*, unless, in defiance of Euclid, you prove that a part is equal to the whole. The text, then, cannot mean that you should tell either the priest or the bishop, for he is not the church, and is utterly destitute of the most essential attributes ascribed to it.

The idea that every petty dispute that occurs among the mass of the laity—however it may infringe on the laws of charity and break the peace of the community—is to be carried to the *head of the Catholic Church*, is ineffably absurd; and yet where else could you think of obtaining an *infallible decision*? The laity must hear the *church*; and to *that* tribunal the *first* and *last* appeal is made. The Pope is their *sovereign* authority; but is he infallible? No; it is admitted that Popes may err—that they have erred—that some of them have embraced heresy—that they have contradicted one another—cursed one another—and that many of them have been prodigies of vice, of avarice, sensuality, and malignity. Be-

sides, some of them have been grossly ignorant; and though the fine arts which embellish luxury, and throw the graceful veil of sentiment over the darker features of depravity, have found in them some of their most ardent supporters, yet have the sciences that tend to enlarge, ennoble, and liberalise the mind, at the same time that they minister to the comfort and independence of the people, been ever bitterly opposed by the Roman court. She is intensely jealous of popular knowledge, and freedom of thought. Hence, her *Index Expurgatorius* and her *Inquisition*. In the case of Galileo, the Pope pronounced the Copernican system “false in science, and heretical in religion,” which every school-boy now knows to be a mistake.*

It is sad, as one has well remarked, to see the illustrious Pascal trying to save the Pope, at the expense of common sense, by making a distinction between matters of fact, and matters of doctrine,—as if a man could be infallibly right in his opinions, and yet be *imposed on by falsehood*! Will not a man’s opinions depend on his information?—and how can infallible truth dwell with ignorance? What communion hath light with darkness? All Scripture, as well as philosophy, runs counter to the orthodox notion in the Church of Rome, that Truth and Vice may take sweet counsel together, in the same breast. Christ declares, that *if* a man will *do the will* of God, he shall know of the doctrine, &c.; † and, again, that he that hears his words, and *does* them *not*, is like the man who built his house on the *sand*, and it fell, and great was the fall of it. ‡ Where it is taught, that truth may flourish on the ruins of virtue, depend upon it, that the science of theology is nothing better than a “mystery of iniquity.”

Leaving, however, the Neros of the Papacy, whose names Catholic historians never mention without blushing, we shall

* See Brewster’s *Martyrs of Science*, or the *Penny Cyclopaedia*, art. Galileo. The *Catholic* articles in this work are said to be written by Dr. Wiseman.

† John vii. 17; Matt. vii. 24, &c.

glance at one or two of the decisions of this infallible tribunal. The Council of Trent ordered an authentic edition of the Vulgate to be prepared, and published under Papal authority. Sixtus V. superintended the work, as it passed through the press, and watched the correction of the proofs with the utmost attention and care. It was published with a flourish of trumpets, accompanied by a bull declaring it to be perfect, and denouncing with threats and anathemas any that should presume to find errors in it. Thus the infallible guardian of revelation uttered his voice. Nevertheless, it was scarcely issued, when men of learning found that it swarmed with errors,—insomuch, that it was recalled by Clement VIII., and another edition brought out, with similar claims and curses! Now, when *such* doctors differ, what can the poor illiterate peasant or mechanic do?—Which is he to believe? If he submit to the Vicar of Christ this year, the next Vicar may excommunicate him for abiding by that very submission. Some time ago, it was a mortal sin in these realms, to eat meat on a Saturday. All that has been changed by the unchangeable church. Another Pope, or even the present, may revoke this indulgence, and the devil may be detected lurking in a beefsteak.

The history of the Catholic mission in China, will further show the value of this steady and safe guide to all truth! The Jesuits, with Ricci at their head, considered the rites of Pagan worship as merely civil and political, and, accordingly, allowed their converts to conform to them, and attend the idolatrous feasts. Others differed from them; and, in 1645, Morales, a Dominican, procured a bull from the Pope, denouncing them as superstitious and abominable. The Jesuits, however, induced Pope Alexander VII., in 1656, to declare that they were merely political ceremonies, and that the toleration of them was both prudent and charitable. Here were two infallible decrees, directly clashing on a most vital practical point, and in a case where it was absolutely necessary that the oracle should have uttered a certain sound. But, as if to render

confusion worse confounded, and to make the fickle authority of Rome more contemptible to the heathen, the decision was set aside again in 1740, by a decree of Clement XI., which brought him into collision with the emperor, who took part, of course, with the Jesuits.* Now, what the better were these Chinese converts of the infallible guidance of Rome? A child that read the New Testament could have told them, "that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God;" and that Paul declares, "I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils;—ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and the table of devils."† But the Jesuits gave them no cup to drink, neither did they, like the immortal Morrison, give them the New Testament to read. Had they done so, the poor people need not have waited in suspense till truth should come up in a bucket from the antipodes,—and all this intriguing of rival orders, with conflicting Popes, and all the scandal it brought on Christianity, might have been spared.

* Medhurst's China.

† 1 Cor. x. 20, 21.

CHAPTER IX.

ON GENERAL COUNCILS.

WHAT an illustration such cases are of the reasoning of Lainez, general of the Jesuits, in the Council of Trent! "For this reason," said he, "the church is infallible, because it has an *infallible head*. And thus he is separated from the church, who is separated from the Pope, its head. . . . If each of the bishops in council be fallible, it cannot be denied that *all of them together are fallible*; and if the authority of the council arose from the bishops, no council could ever be called *general*, wherein the number of those present is incomparably less than the number of those who are absent." He mentioned, that in that very council, under Paul III., the most momentous articles concerning the canonical books, the authority of translations, the equality of tradition to Scripture, had been decided by a number less than fifty! That if multitude gave authority, these decisions gave none at all. "But, as a number of prelates convened by the Pontiff, for the purpose of constituting a General Council, however few, derives not the same efficacy of *being general*, from any other cause than the Pope's designation, so, likewise, *he is the sole source of its authority*."

It appears to me, that no Roman Catholic can get over the force of this reasoning. If you cannot strike the hidden fire of infallibility out of Peter's keys, it is in vain that you hammer

for it any where else. But the argument, though conclusive, is fatal to Rome. We have already shown, that the virtue comes not from Peter, and that the Pope's pretensions are utterly unfounded. Hence, according to the admission of Lainez, "infallibility" falls at once to the ground. It has been attempted to evade this conclusion in several ways. It is argued, that though individually the bishops are fallible, yet when assembled lawfully in council, they are the reverse; as if the addition of ciphers could produce a positive number, or you could multiply *nothings* into *something*; as if you could change the nature of *base money*, by fusing and recoinng it; as if lunatics could be converted into Solomons, by putting their heads together! How can you get any thing into the whole that is not in the parts? If there be life in *none* of the members, how can it be in the body?

Every member of parliament possesses a portion—a fraction, so to speak, of the legislative authority of the nation—and he meets his fellows, *not to acquire a power*, but to put that he has already in action. The result of the united exercise of this power is *a law*, which may be good, bad, or indifferent—the very best, or the very worst. The members were empowered to make laws, and they have made them. But a council of bishops is assembled—for what? Is it simply to make canons, whether good or bad, true or false, as the case may be? For that they are, indeed, competent. As intelligent and prudent men, they may adopt wise regulations; but it is folly to expect from them *infallible decrees*. This is a *result* of the combination which there is nothing in any of the elements to produce. You cannot bring light out of darkness, nor a clean thing out of an unclean. No possible mixture of errable minds can generate infallibility. You might strike a flame out of sparks that lay hidden and scattered in various substances; but there is not a scintilla of infallibility in any of the bishops! Nor is the authority of a council analagous to the power of an army, or any thing else that depends on union

of parts for its strength; for there is no strength in an army of paralytic men—they cannot lift a sword, nor pull a trigger; where each is impotent, the whole are impotent. The conclusion of the Jesuit, therefore, is irresistible, that the authority of councils, whatever it may be, is totally dependent on the Pope.

It is absurd to say, that a general council is greater than the Pope. Such a proposition is quite inconsistent with the Papal system. What is a general council? Why confined to *bishops*? And if not confined to them, why not? How many bishops are necessary to constitute a General Council?—three hundred, five hundred, a thousand; or how many? Must it include *all* the bishops of the universal church, or only a majority of them? And why a majority? Does truth depend on *numbers* or on *evidence*? If on evidence, may it not be as clear to few as to many—to ten minds as to ten thousand?

Again, why should the decisions of fifty, or five hundred bishops, bind the consciences of all the bishops and clergy of the Christian world? What warrant is there from Scripture, or from antiquity, to exclude the *inferior clergy* and the *people* from deliberations for the general good? In fine, what are the constituent elements of a General Council? How do you know whether it is legal or illegal? By whom should it be convened, and who is the judge of its legality? Besides, how can a body such as this, not *permanent* in its nature, having no *fixed place of meeting*, no *stated jurisdiction*—so undefined as to its limits, so questionable as to its authority—how can this be a guide to the laity in their religious doubts? How can the industrious, unlettered masses of the people answer all these vexed questions about councils? Not one in ten thousand of them knows their nature, their number, their history, their decisions, or ever troubles his head about them. Must 'Tom, Jack, Tim, and Martin, master the canon law before they can read the Gospels? Shall Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, and James lie on the shelf, as if they were dumb

as a phrenological bust, till our mechanics have ascertained what the Greek and Latin councils have said on certain passages? Roman Catholics are not themselves agreed that councils are "*sovereign*;" and if they were, they are not "*speaking*." We must seek their meaning in the lumber of the "*dead letter*!"—in Latin and Greek tomes so ponderous and so numerous, that it would take a life to read them! Is it for *them* that you would set aside the *vernacular* Scriptures as "silent" and "dead?" Why, the councils are dead ages ago! It is near three hundred years since the last of them expired.

Thus we find, that neither Popes nor councils possess the attributes of the tribunal, which Roman Catholics insist is necessary to keep us from error and schism. Strange that the infallible church should be perplexed and divided about the very seat of infallibility! The ancient philosophers were never more puzzled about the presence chamber of the soul. Thus, as Chillingworth remarks, our judge of controversy is our greatest controversy. There is no truth of the Gospel involved in such uncertainty as this pretended guide to all truth; and it is in searching for *it* that we are ever in most danger of straying. If God had appointed a human judge to pronounce infallibly in all mental litigation—in all cases of conscience—would not the path to his tribunal be as plain as the way to the parish church or county court-house? Would not this light of the world be like a city set upon a hill, or like the sun in the heavens whose lustre could not be hid?

No less than three parties in the Church of Rome profess to guide us to their guide, *all* leading in different directions. Some say infallibility is in the Pope; others vehemently deny this, and contend that it is in a General Council. We have seen that they are both wrong. A third party, and by far the largest, concurring with Protestants in this judgment, declare that a General Council lawfully convened, and presided over by the Pope, or his legate, is infallible; and further, that the

Papal decisions, *ex cathedra*, if acquiesced in—that is, if not protested against by the church at large—are also to be held as infallibly true.

1. Consider the council with the Pope at its head. This theory destroys the authority of seven or eight of the first General Councils—nearly half the list—which were not called nor governed by the Pope, but by the Emperor; yet Rome has acknowledged them to be true—thereby nullifying her own claim, and shutting the mouths of her wisest advocates! We cannot wonder that error is inconsistent; we easily understand how a law receives its sanction from the signature of the chief magistrate, but that his signature should change the nature of the law from bad to good, is certainly a mystery. Now, the decrees of councils must be either true or false. If false, how can the Pope's signature or sanction make them true? On the other hand, if true in themselves, whether he signs them or not, they remain eternally true, for truth is unchangeable! The Pope, therefore, leaves their dogmas as he finds them; there is no spiritual alchemy by which he can turn error into truth. The council *per se* is fallible; the Pope *per se* is fallible; how, when wedded, can they produce an infallible offspring? Like begets like. The creed resulting from this embrace will be born in the image of its parents.*

2. As to the Papal decrees being infallible, because they are *submitted to*, it is certainly a strange reason for infallibility. Think of the bishops rising *en masse* against the Pope!—an insurrection of mitres—a war of croziers,—all levelled at the crown of the Vicar of Jesus Christ! That would certainly be a second war of angels! No, you will say; not so. They would meet in council in an orderly manner, and *constitutionally* condemn the Pope, if he fell into heresy,—an event which might happen again, as it did happen before.—Constitutionally!

* If you say the Pope will sign *only* the canons that are *true*, then you beg his infallibility, and are contradicted by history.

It is impossible that a council could assemble to condemn the Pope, *constitutionally*, according to your system. To be lawful, a council must be called and presided over *by the Pope*. Will an erring Pope be such a fool as to call a council to condemn himself?—Will he *sign* a decree for his own deposition? Will the Vicar of Christ—the Vicegerent of God, allow a number of his subjects to thrust him out of his chair? and, above all, will he sign his own death warrant? The thing is preposterous. The clergy have no remedy against the Pope! The head of their church may become a heretic, and hold the whole body in utter defiance. Without him, they can do nothing at all, *lawfully*. If the hierarchy of one nation rises, it is a *schism*; and it is not to be expected, that those of all nations should ever rise simultaneously: but if they do, farewell to the Papacy! When the *members* sit in judgment on the *head*, it is folly to talk of infallibility. Whither, then, shall the laity turn for deliverance from the evils of private judgment? The Latin Bible, we have shown, is not to be relied on, even if they would read it; and “the church” has given them no infallible translation,—for the Douay has never received the sanction of any council, nor even of the court of Rome. The various editions differ from one another, each later one coming nearer to the authorised version, and adopting from it the very passages denounced by Ward, in his *Errata*, as corruptions. But if our countrymen had a translation ever so perfect, still it is not to be trusted without note or comment. The maxim of churchmen is, that the Bible, without an authorised interpretation, is an obscure and an unsafe book, and that the indiscriminate reading of it does more harm than good—spreads more error than truth—occasions more sin than virtue. Surely, then, the anxious mother of the faithful has provided a *commentary* for her children; she has minced the strong meat for the clergy, and diluted the sincere milk of the word for her babes, the laity!

Nothing of the kind! Dr. Doyle swore, before the Parlia-

mentary committee, in 1825, that the Douay notes carry no weight—that the authors of many of them are unknown, and, therefore, that the people are not bound by them. The infallible guide wishes, it would seem, to be followed implicitly in the dark. Why has she not compiled a body of divinity according to the traditions of the fathers? or a commentary on the whole Bible, according to their unanimous consent? or a Hebrew and Greek text, that would bid defiance to German critics? or a compendium of conciliar decrees, which should exhibit the unity and certainty of her faith in every age, supplying, at the same time, proofs to establish the identity of her dogmas with the gospel? We, who are so simple as to trust our senses, obey our consciences, and follow the teaching of our Bible, are taunted by the Puseyites, because we do not listen to the authority of the Church! Authority!—The authority of a disciple against his master!—of an officer against his general! of a special pleader against the plain law which he strains every nerve to pervert! What does yours rest upon? You answer—“The Bible.” What does the authority of the Bible rest upon? You answer—“The Church.” Thus we have the Church and the Bible—the Bible and the Church—turned up and down perpetually, like an hour glass, to suit the convenience of your logic! Sometimes the Bible has no claim at all on your faith, but as it stands upon the bottom of church authority; and when we ask for the foundation of that authority—“Oh, sure it is bottomed on the Bible!” Who can doubt after that? The monument upholds the statue,—and to avoid being under a compliment, the statue upholds the monument! The church is a building on a *Rock*, and therefore the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. But lest the “Rock of ages” should roll into the sea, or be blasted and blown into the air, the church most obligingly sits upon it, and endows it with everlasting stability! Wonderful church, and still more wonderful logic! According to this plan of resting the Bible on the church, and *vice versa*, the church on the

Bible, you would bring both into universal discredit and contempt. You would set the Apostles and Prophets floating above the clouds in a balloon, and you would fasten your church to the tail of it as a parachute, which may possibly break, but cannot prevent, the fall.

How would you convince an Infidel of the truth of Christianity? You would call on him to hear the church,—would you? He would denounce it, as a corporation of cunning priests. You would say, that it was established by Jesus Christ;—he would reply, as the Socialists unblushingly do, that the Saviour of mankind was a clever imposter. You would assert that he was the Son of God, but he would deny the assertion. Now, to convince this man, must you not appeal to his reason and conscience, that is, to his PRIVATE JUDGMENT, while you prove the following points:—1st. That the Supreme Being has revealed his will to mankind. 2d. That this revelation is contained in the Bible. 3. That this volume conveys a charter of infallible authority to the church which Christ established on earth. 4th. That the Church of Rome is the exclusive body to which this divine prerogative of inerrability has been granted. Now, suppose you succeeded in the first steps of this demonstration. He admits these truths; on *what* do they rest in his mind? Is it not on *his judgment*, formed on the evidence submitted? You have not come to the church *yet*. You cannot prove a church from revelation till you have proved the revelation first, just as you could not establish a legal claim by act of parliament, till you had first proved the existence of such act.

You come now to demonstrate the infallibility of the church from the Bible. But are you sure you understand it? Is your *private judgment*, exercised on texts of Scripture, on whose interpretation half the learned world is against you, so infallibly certain, that you can rest an INFALLIBLE CHURCH upon it? And does it come to this, that your converted Infidel must take the infallibility of the church either on the authority of his own

private judgment or on yours? This would be like the earth resting on the back of an elephant, and the elephant on a tortoise. You deny that private judgment can support any thing, and yet you pile on it mountains of absurdity! You denounce its authority as fallacious, and yet you appeal to that authority in all your efforts to convert Protestants! You maintain that it has not a throat to swallow a gnat, and yet you make it gulp down a camel! We are to trust its guidance implicitly through jungles and morasses covered with fogs,—that is, through your arguments for infallibility,—and we are to desert and denounce it on the royal highway of the gospel,—where, with the lamp of truth in our hand, we recognise the footsteps of Apostles, Prophets, and a host of believers who have trodden it from the beginning until now.

Where then is the use of this guide—this Rule of Faith? Before the people can, as rational beings, rely upon it, they must go through the whole of the evidences by which the truth of Christianity is established, they must master Biblical criticism so as to understand the disputed texts which relate to the church, they must turn over the tomes of ancient and profane history, to identify, if possible, their church with the catholic church of Christ; and when they have thus overcome the greatest difficulties, ascertained and established the fundamental truths of natural and revealed religion, and finally based infallibility on the conclusion arrived at, through this long and laborious process of investigation, what follows, on church principles?—Just these two things:—

1st. An infallible church rests on a fallible private judgment, and on that alone!

2nd. The man who has thus erected this proud structure finds, when the key-stone is laid upon the arch, that the light of heaven is for ever shut out; and the work of his own hands becomes a dungeon in which his mind is destined to languish, till he dies!

Rome has most unwarrantably seized on every text in the Bible relating to the spiritual church, the kingdom of Christ, as if they were all obviously descriptive of her own hierarchy. In this lust of monopoly she has, of course, appropriated the passage in 1 Tim. iii. 15, which sounds very well for her purpose; but unfortunately for that purpose, Timothy was not at *Rome* when Paul gave him directions how to behave in the house of God. If so much even as this text would import of stability had been intimated of the Roman Church, it would have been continually rung in our ears as decisive of her infallibility. But was the church at Ephesus infallible? Was it the pillar and the ground of the truth, in such a sense that Christianity must fall with it? If so, where is the pillar now, and what has become of the truth? Alas, the besom of destruction has been swept over the Asiatic churches, and their very ruins are buried in the sands of the desert. Even such a declaration, therefore, could not have guaranteed the perpetuity of Rome as a true church of Christ. She cannot, however, claim any such support. There is not in the Bible a promise to Rome! On the contrary, all the allusions made to that city are awfully ominous of its fate; not merely when the pencil of prophecy darkly portrays its doom, but when the practical pen of the Apostle points out the dangers and duties of its primitive church. To these latter only we shall now refer, and that with all possible brevity. It appears from some expressions in the epistle to the Romans, that the spirit of pride and boasting was in that church from the beginning. "Boast not against the branches"—"Be not high-minded but fear." She was but a wild olive branch grafted in—not "*the Root*"—not the mother of all churches, as Pius IV. alleges, and every priest swears: for Jerusalem and Antioch, and others, were born before her. God spared not the *natural* branches, the Jews; take heed, says Paul, that he also spare not thee! "Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of

God: *on them which fell*, severity; but toward thee goodness, *if thou continue* in his goodness; OTHERWISE THOU ALSO SHALT BE CUT OFF!" *

It is strange enough that Paul should threaten an *infallible* church with the doom of them "that *fell*," and tell her that if she did not behave well, she should be "cut off!" What! the spouse of Christ cast away—the city of God demolished—the kingdom of Messiah overturned—the pillar of truth laid prostrate—the Vine which the divine husbandman planted, uprooted and destroyed! Such is the *impossible* calamity threatened by Paul, *if Rome be* that spouse, or that city, or that pillar, or that vine—a calamity which would falsify the promises of God, nullify the work of Christ, frustrate the operations of the Spirit;—in a word, defeat all the merciful purposes of the Deity in regard to our race. But let it be remembered, that Rome was not *the* Vine—not even an essential part of it—not the Roor; she was only "a branch"—one of the *many* that flourished on the same stock, whence she might be lopped off to make room for another and a better. The fall of a withered branch is not the fall of the tree. The Tree of Christianity shall flourish for ever, spreading, like the Banian, on every side—striking its roots into every soil—offering its shade to every tribe—and putting forth its leaves for the healing of every nation!

Let us return to Timothy:—"That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and the ground of truth." In the Greek there are various readings, and a different punctuation, which would connect the "pillar," not with the "church," but with what follows. Take the church, however, as the pillar and ground of the truth, and I ask again, what is the church, the house of God? Is it the bishops? Is it the clergy? Where in all the Bible are *they* called the *house of God*? The reader will recollect my remarks on this

* Romans xi. 17—22.

metaphor, and the various passages where it occurs, and where believers, individually, are represented as "living stones." They all throw light on the present text. The "house" and the "church" are in apposition, as grammarians say, and mean the same thing. Let us translate the passage from the phrase of priestcraft into honest English, and we have again the word "*congregation*." Was the church at Ephesus a "congregation" of bishops, or of priests? No, certainly; and if not, neither bishops nor priests, nor both, constitute the pillar of truth. The church in which Timothy was to behave himself becomingly was a "congregation of faithful men"—of the believing laity, with their bishops and deacons. Every such assembly is a pillar of truth; for it holds it forth, it publishes and sustains it, by believing it, by professing it, by obeying it; so that men seeing their good works would be led to glorify our Father who is in heaven. How important, therefore, the caution, that Timothy should do nothing to cause offence in such an assembly, to deface the inscription on such a living monument, or to mar the power of such an illustrious testimony!

Oh no! if truth perish from the *hearts* of men—if its sacred lineaments fade away out of their lives—if there are no more faithful bosoms to enshrine it, and noble spirits to thrill with its ethereal energies—if it is not quick and powerful in the soul, and luminous in the character, so that its professors are living epistles of Christ, written in letters of light, known and read of all men—in vain do we look for it in creeds and forms, in solemn rituals and splendid ceremonials, in hierarchical institutions and national establishments. It is not to *these* that Jehovah addresses himself, saying, "Ye are my witnesses that I am God." Such witnesses have borne a testimony far more imposing in favour of the thirty thousand gods of Paganism. All these may be but the posthumous honours, the preposterous homage which superstition willingly pays to the body of religion, when her own poison has deprived it of life!

CHAPTER X.

THE KEYS AND THE CONFESSIONAL.

“AND I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.” “Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: As my Father hath sent me, even so I send you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.”*

We shall best understand the nature of the power here conveyed, by examining the figure which our Saviour employed on this occasion. In ancient times, *keys* were regarded as an emblem of authority, or the symbol of office; and were received as such by state functionaries, just as the great seal is by the Lord Chancellor of England. Thus, God says—“And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.”† Such an authority as this was given to Joseph, in Egypt. This passage is applied by Jesus to himself:—“These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that

* Matt. x. 19; John xx. 21—23.

† Isaiah xxii. 22.

hath the *key of David*, He that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth." *

Now, observe, it is the person that has the key, who actually opens and shuts; and this passage proves, that the Redeemer exercises a power of remitting and retaining sin, with which no man can interfere. Whatever be the power given to the church, it must be *essentially* different from this, which the Lord himself personally exercises,—a power pre-eminent and peculiar, belonging to Him alone—his glory, which he will not give to another. The house of David represents the church of Christ; and when Jesus says, "I am *he* that hath the key of David," he proclaims himself to be the sole ruler of his spiritual kingdom, to whom it is given in charge by his Father. Moreover, as the kingdom of grace upon earth is but an introduction to the kingdom of glory in heaven; and as all the subjects of the former have everlasting life, it follows, that the power that excludes from the one, by consequence, excludes from the other also. Hence it would follow, that the man who can remit the "eternal punishment" due to sin, has the "key of hell and of death," † and can destroy both body and soul for ever. If any set of men had this tremendous power, we might well fear *them*. But the "fear of man" is every where spoken against in Scripture, as ensnaring and sinful.

Again, the power in question was to be exercised by the Apostles "*on earth*;" it has to do, therefore, with the members of the church only in this life. When the Apostles, in the person of Peter, received the keys of this kingdom, did they receive the power of forgiving *sin as against God*? This is the great point. Remission of sins implies several things, which are represented in Scripture as emphatically the work of God. For instance, the pardoned sinner is also *justified*. By whom? Is it by the priest? No; "It is God that justi-

* Rev. iii. 7.

† Rev. i. 18.

fieth." "Being justified freely by his grace." "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.*

Again, no man can enter the kingdom of heaven—that is, the true church of Christ—without being "born again," or *regenerated*. Now, this change is invariably represented as the work of God. All such are born of the Holy Spirit—of whose *purifying* influence water is the usual emblem, though the same thing is also represented by "fire." We learn from John,† that the sons of God are born (as their very designation imports—they are not *the sons of the priest*)—not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, *nor of THE WILL OF MAN*, but "of GOD." This change, then, is not dependent on the will or intention of the priest, who is certainly nothing more than a man, though Peter Dens would make him a god—at least in the confessional. Paul teaches the same doctrine—"We are *his* workmanship, CREATED in Christ Jesus unto good works."‡ As we have not heard that Roman Catholic priests pretend to create any thing but their Creator, they cannot, of course, claim this "workmanship" as theirs. Several other passages might be adduced to prove that regeneration is the work of God, associated sometimes with faith, sometimes with the Gospel, sometimes with the "word," and sometimes with its ceremonial emblem, baptism. But we shall defer the consideration of them till we come to speak of *Baptismal Regeneration*, which is now lulling so many souls asleep in the established church.

To open the kingdom of heaven then, by pardoning and regenerating the sinner, is of necessity, a work so great, that none but the Creator can accomplish it; and, therefore, the "opening" and "remitting" ascribed to the Apostles, must be a different thing altogether, and must relate to a department in which it is competent for fallible and feeble men to act. Before

* Rom. viii. 33, and iii. 24.; Eph. ii. 8, 9.

† John i. 13.

‡ Ephesians ii. 10.

we proceed to examine what the Apostles *actually did*, in the *use* of the keys, in the *exercise* of their power, we shall stop to notice one or two passages which may serve to throw more light on the subject:—

“Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye *shut up* the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves; *neither suffer* ye them that are entering to go in!” * What! had these hypocrites the “power of the keys” too? If so, it was not so mysterious a matter as people imagine. Could *they* save souls, and destroy them at their pleasure? How then did they shut the kingdom of heaven? They did it by resisting and persecuting the truth—by intimidating, coercing, and excommunicating humble and faithful professors;—they did it by their darkening glosses, their self-righteous and superstitious devices, and their law-nullifying traditions. How dreadful was the guilt they incurred! So wicked were they, that they not only refused to enter themselves, but they stood in the door, and by falsehood, violence, and scandal, hindered those who would.

Again—“Woe unto you lawyers, for ye have taken away the KEY OF KNOWLEDGE; ye enter not in yourselves, and them that were entering ye hindered.” † These lawyers then had the “*key* of knowledge;” they were teachers by profession; but they were false to their trust, either misleading the people, or leaving them in the grossest ignorance. Now, as these bad men had the power of shutting the kingdom, it is manifest that had they done their duty, they could have *opened* it, and the people might have gone in and been saved. But was salvation dependent on them? Could not God save without their co-operation? As servants in his household under that economy, they were slothful and faithless; and, therefore, when put out of office, the keys of authority were taken from them, and given to honest men. Peter and his brethren confessed that Jesus was the Messiah, and he immediately added, “Flesh

* Matthew xxiii. 13.

† Luke xi. 52.

and blood hath not revealed this unto you, but my Father who is in heaven." Hence, he proceeded to invest them with office as his ministers, in the room of the men whom he had discarded. They had abused their trust; the kingdom was taken from them; and the fishermen of Galilee superseded the Sanhedrim.

Thus, we find the mystery of the keys a very simple matter! The Apostles and their associates did bind and loose in a sense peculiar to themselves—that is, they sometimes inflicted *miraculous* punishment on notorious offenders, as a warning to others; and they also freed persons from the supernatural inflictions which they had endured for their sins. Ananias, Sapphira, and Elymas, the sorcerer, will illustrate the former part of this assertion, and nearly all the Apostolic miracles, the second. Also, as the inspired heralds of a *new dispensation*—as the *first* publishers of the Gospel—as the organs of Revelation, the Apostles opened the kingdom of heaven in a high and peculiar sense. *They* acted as AMBASSADORS; and the King who sent them, authorised their acts, and ratified their doctrine, by “signs and wonders following”—signs which no modern teachers, unless such as the late Edward Irving, pretend to exhibit. In all this they stood alone, and *could* have no successors. There can no more be a succession of *founders*, than a succession of foundations in the same building. But this has been shown sufficiently already.

The power of the keys, then, so far as it has descended to the Christian ministry, implies two things:—an authority to *preach the Gospel*, and to administer *discipline* in the congregation. Consider what the first ministers of Christianity did, in the use of the power they had received. On the day of Pentecost the door of Faith was opened to Jew and Gentile—and it can never be shut again, till all the ransomed ones are saved to sin no more! Then we hear of the Lord adding to the congregation such as should be saved. How did Peter open the door to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius? By

preaching Christ as the Saviour of the world.* When Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch, after accomplishing their mission, and met the church there, they rehearsed all that God had done by them, and “how *He* had opened the *door of faith* to the Gentiles.” This language is remarkable. Great as was the success of these men, they regarded themselves merely as instruments; and, endowed as they were with miraculous power, they did not presume to say that *they* had opened the door. They gave God all the glory, which their pretended successors are very far from doing. In like manner, at the meeting of the *mother church* in Jerusalem—(begging Rome’s pardon!)—Peter and Paul related what God had done by their *preaching* (not by their *sacraments*) for the poor heathen. Now, though, in this sense, all missionaries, evangelists, and pastors, who faithfully proclaim the gospel, have the keys as well as Paul and Peter, I think it would be difficult to find them on the persons of our *silent* bishops. I fear many that put keys on their mitres, and crosses on their steeples, have taken away the key of knowledge from the people, and have made the cross of Christ of no effect by their traditions.

The second method by which the visible church can be opened or shut, is by the exercise of *discipline*. Every society, in order to be permanent, must have terms of communion, a regular government, and a power of expelling unworthy members. It is so with the church. The law of Christian discipline is laid down in Matthew.† The *church* to be told here, as the *last* resource, is, and must be, the *congregation* to which the contending parties respectively belong, whether that congregation acts through the minister alone, or through the minister and the deacons or elders, or whether the whole body takes the matter into its own hands, is not essential to the argument.

Let it be observed, that it is in immediate connexion with this work of discipline, this act of the congregation with or

* Acts x.; Acts xiv. 27. † Matt. xviii. 15—20.

through its office-bearers, that Christ declares, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." If you quote our Lord's words to Peter, to prove the infallibility of Rome, I will quote *these* words with more reason, to prove the infallibility of every Presbyterian, Independent, or Methodist congregation in the kingdom, that meets together in the spirit of true worship, acknowledging their one Head, Jesus Christ; and his one law, the Bible. You say, Christ promised to be with his Apostles all days, and *therefore* with the Church of Rome. (What a jumping *nonsequitur*!) I have a promise equally strong in the 20th verse, for the infallibility of a very small church indeed!—"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst." What more than this could be said to any church? In allusion to this passage, one of the greatest of the "Fathers" declares, that "where there are three Christians, even *laymen*, there is a church."*

We have happily a case to illustrate this law of the congregation of Christ, (laid down so solemnly by himself, and so frequently enforced by his servant Paul) in the epistle to the Corinthians, † where an unworthy member was "delivered over to Satan"—that is, put away out of the church, and thrust back into the world, Satan's kingdom—"for the destruction of the flesh"—not of his life, but of his sinful propensity, which was a very scandalous one. Thus was he *bound*, by the authority of Paul, it is true, but also in full meeting of the church by the voice of "the many"—the laity. By comparing this with a passage in the second epistle, † we find that on repentance this offender was "loosed" again by the same laity acting with their ministers under Apostolic sanction.

"If any shall deny, either that sacramental confession was instituted by divine command, or that it is necessary to salvation, or shall say, that the practice of secretly confessing to

* Tertullian, Exh. Cast. † 1 Cor. 5.; 1 Cor. ii. 10.

the priest alone, as it has ever been observed from the beginning by the Catholic Church, and is still observed, is foreign to the institution or command of Christ, let him be accursed.”*

Notwithstanding this curse, I have no hesitation in denying every one of these assertions, as utterly unfounded. In common life, we often find the greatest liars the stoutest swearers : it is even so with churches. The fewer and feebler the arguments, the fiercer and more numerous the anathemas. The gospel tells us to swear not at all—to bless them that curse us, to bless and curse not. The disciple of Jesus does not curse ; but the mouth of the wicked is full of cursing. James assures us, that cursing and blessing cannot come from the same mouth. How, then, can the spouse of Christ utter anathemas ? An honest man does all he can to find the truth ;—his allegiance to his Redeemer, compels him to differ from Rome on the dogma of transubstantiation ;—or, he finds that sacramental confession was neither instituted by divine command, nor practised in the primitive church, and, therefore, cannot be necessary to salvation : whereupon, the tender-hearted mother of the faithful invokes the malediction of heaven upon his head ! Is not this a fine “ mark of the true church ? ”

Confession, I admit, is necessary to salvation !—It is essentially involved in the repentance which is never absent from saving faith. The humble and contrite acknowledgment of sin, is most earnestly enjoined throughout the Scripture as absolutely requisite to our pardon and peace.† But, to *whom* should we confess ? That is the question ; and the obvious answer is—To the *offended party* ; to whom else ? Reason, and conscience, and Scripture concur in saying, that sin, which is an offence against God, should be confessed to God. This confession is a part of the Lord’s prayer, which implores forgiveness immediately from the heavenly throne. Yes, but is not the *confessional* the ante-chamber to that throne—the outer

* Con. Trid. ses. 14. De Peniten. Sacram. can. 6.

† Psalms, xxxii. 5 ; xli. 4 ; 1. 3, 4 ; Jer. iii. 13 ; Dan. ix. 5, &c. &c.

sanctuary through which only the holiest can be entered?—No; not the confessional, but the closet! “But thou, when thou *prayest, enter into thy closet*, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.”* It is very strange, if a penitent child cannot go to his father for forgiveness, unless through the mediation of a man who may be a stranger, and an “enemy in his heart by wicked works.” A mediator there *is* certainly, but *He* is no sinner. “Such a High Priest *became* us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and higher than the heavens;” and Peter declares, “there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.”

God is our moral governor, and our judge. He rules the *heart*, which he alone can “search.” His eye scrutinises the inner man, discriminates the motives, discerns the thoughts. This is the prerogative of JESUS, which he asserts as one of the most decisive proofs of his divinity. Before no other judge can the *SOUL* be lawfully arraigned. *It* is bound to demur to all human jurisdiction, and appeal to a higher court. Only the Creator of our moral constitution, so “fearfully and wonderfully made,” can detect all its derangements, and set its broken springs in order. You might as well put a blind engineer to guide a steam-coach, or a deaf judge on the bench to decide cases affecting life and limb, as to set up a man to pronounce judgment on the spiritual condition of his fellow-man. Suppose he could measure his guilt, how could he *punish* it? Has the priest the key of hell? “No; but he can deliver the culprit into the hands of Christ.” Can he?—Then is Christ the priest’s executioner!

Indeed, what man calls virtue, is often nothing but splendid vice. He sees the blossom, the fair colour, the deceptive appearance, the tempting fruit,—but not the hidden spirit which makes the plant a poison. Therefore, the priest often praises

* Matt. vi. 6.

what the Judge of all condemns ; and there is a total discordance between the judgments of earth and of Heaven. Man may censure, curse, torture—he may prepare his chains, and racks, and faggots,—but these can only touch the body. Can he kindle the unquenchable fire on the immortal spirit, and doom it to the fellowship of tormenting demons ? The Creator has reserved for the sinner an eternal punishment, so horrible, that words cannot describe, nor heart conceive it. Shall a fellow-sinner presume to remit **THAT** ? Granted that pardon is given by the priest, in consideration of the merits of Christ, in which the penitent is supposed to trust, and that the penances are imposed to make satisfaction to God for the “temporal punishment” which he has incurred ; still, God alone is capable of judging what temporal punishment ought to be inflicted. He does not willingly afflict,—he knows what we are able to bear, and tempers the fire to our capacity. He knows the *kind* of punishment that will *correct* our besetting sins ;—perfectly acquainted with our frame, with our temptations, and secret leanings—He knows when and where to strike, and when to withhold his hand. “Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” He does it *himself* ! He does not leave the scourging of his *sons* to servants or slaves. How can the priest inflict the temporal punishment due to our sins ? Who told him what is due ? Is it a few miserable penances—a few bodily exercises, which profit nothing ? Who does not know, that the worst of human vices have been rampant under sackcloth and ashes—that austerity gives energy to passion—that lust and pride never burned more fiercely than in the presence of deaths’ heads and cross-bones—that it has been the custom of whole populations to be,

“Even in penance, planning sins a-new ?”

It is in the course of his PROVIDENCE, that God inflicts temporal punishment ;—has he ever given the reins of that

providence into the hands of the priests? Can they cloud the sun, that it may not shine—shut the heavens, that it may not rain—let loose the pestilence, and guide the storm? They have, certainly, been suffered to afflict the saints of the Most High, just as Satan was suffered to torture Job; but I suppose they will not be emulous to be reckoned the followers of *that* inflicter of penance! No human being ever yet made himself invulnerable to the ills of life, by the performance of penance. The beads are no charm against sickness, sorrow, pain, disappointment, bereavement, poverty, and scorn; and though these gratuitous mortifications may, for a time, still the agonies of remorse, it is only for a time. The sleep into which these opiates lull the conscience, will not be eternal!

I have said, that we should confess to the *injured party*. If we have offended the community, we should confess to the community; if an individual, to that individual we should confess. It is no atonement to *his* injured feelings or character, that we make the confession in secret to *another*, with whom he has no connexion. The Apostle James says—"Confess your faults one to another,"* enjoining a *reciprocal* duty, as binding on the priest as on the penitent. Here the bishop is on a level with the meanest of his flock; and the servant waiting at table, if offended, has power *to absolve* him that wears a mitre. Yet, supposing we have obtained forgiveness from every human being, that does not cancel the account against us in God's book of remembrance. To an immortal being, it matters little whether he is condemned or acquitted by man's judgment. The great point is, to have our sins blotted out by "Him who has power to destroy both body and soul in hell." Him we should fear, and to him we should confess.

Here I may be interrupted, by some one saying—"Certainly, we should confess to God; and we Catholics do confess to him: for the confessional is the tribunal of the Holy Ghost,

* James v. 16.

the priest is his representative, and acts by his authority; and the confession is thus actually made to God, through his deputy. Thus it must be made, for confession through this medium, the Council of Trent has declared *necessary to salvation*."

I know it;—and in this, that council committed one of the grossest errors into which a deliberative assembly was ever betrayed, by the vain affectation of consistency. Your church has made a term of salvation, which God never made. The Judaising teachers said, "Unless ye be circumcised, ye cannot be saved;" and to men of that opinion, Paul answered thus, "If ye be circumcised, CHRIST SHALL PROFIT YOU NOTHING." You assert, that unless we confess secretly to a priest, we cannot be saved;—may I not adopt the conclusion of the Apostle, and say—If you confess in this manner, and with this conviction, Christ shall profit you nothing? "You have made the cross of Christ of none effect by your tradition." You are knocking at the wrong door, which is not only never opened, but there is written over it, "Beware of man-traps." If you make any form, or any performance of man essential to salvation, you nullify faith in Christ, make repentance vain, and conversion fruitless. A man may be born of the Spirit—be justified by faith, and have peace with God,—and yet, if a fellow-sinner refuse to absolve him, he is still "dead in trespasses and sins!"

The *Jewish* system was pre-eminently ceremonial. It was full of bodily exercises and ritual observances, and it was administered by a numerous priesthood. If, therefore, auricular confession might be looked for under any dispensation, it should certainly be under that legal, formal, and ceremonial one. There, however, we seek it in vain; and shall we insist that such an all-controlling inquisition belongs to the spiritual economy of the gospel? This is indeed preposterous! The Jews had no notion that man had power to forgive sins. Had they heard one of their priests say, "*I absolve thee from thy sins*," they would have cried out, "Blasphemy!—who can for-

give sins but God alone?" Even they had read the Scriptures to better purpose; such as these, for example:—"For thy name sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity." Observe, it is not for penance sake, but for mercy sake, that pardon is sought. "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity." If *He* does not impute sin, what matter who else does? If *He* looses, what matter who binds? "Who is he that condemneth?—It is God that justifieth!" "There is forgiveness with thee, that *Thou* mayest be feared." Then we need not, we *should* not, fear the priest! "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and *He* will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for *He* will abundantly pardon." In all this, there is nothing about going to a priest. "To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against him." Forgiveness, then, is the prerogative of God—to him it "*belongs.*"* He alone can sever the chain which binds past guilt upon the soul, and links together the doings of this life and the sufferings of the next.

We are told by the Apostle Peter, that Christ is exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and the remission of sins.† He did not say—"Come and confess to me, the Vicar of Christ—I have got the keys of the kingdom, and will pardon you!" Peter was too pious a man for that. You may learn more of his mind on this subject from the following passage:—"To Him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name, WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH in Him, shall receive remission of sins." Similar is the testimony of Paul, "Through this man is *preached* unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him, ALL THAT BELIEVE are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."‡

* Psa. xxv. 11; xxxii. 2; cxxx. 4, 7; Isa. lv. 5; Dan. ix. 9; Rom. viii. 33.

† Acts v. 31.

‡ Acts x. 43; xiii. 38, 39.

Here Peter and Paul teach, as plainly as words could express it, that forgiveness of sin is not connected with the ceremonial act of a priest, but simply and absolutely with faith in Jesus. They do not say—"Forgiveness of sins is *granted* you by us the Apostles," but forgiveness is "**PREACHED**," *i. e.* proclaimed or declared. Hence another Apostle says—"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." John does not say—"Be careful to confess your sins, in secret, to your pastors, at least once a year, and faithfully perform the penance enjoined." There is no such language in all the Bible! It is not thus inspired men addressed the guilty. They earnestly besought them to be reconciled to God—assuring them that *He* was willing to pardon them, without money and without price,—but never once presuming to take this awful office upon themselves. He that pardons for eternity, is a sovereign, and sits upon the "**THRONE OF GRACE**." Shall popes and bishops dare to exalt themselves above Apostles and Prophets,—

"Assume the God,
Affect to nod,
And shake the spheres!"

holding out their feet to be kissed by the abject worshippers of flesh and blood. The Apostles never were "enthroned," never heard secret confession, never pronounced the formula of absolution. The grace of God is free as the balmy breath of spring, and distils insensibly on the soul, like the dew of heaven. The priest has no power to keep one soul unblessed and dry, while another is baptised with this celestial influence. If some corporation attempted to monopolise the sun that gladdens our fields, or the streams that fertilize the green valleys of our native land, a nation would start up, as one man, to vindicate its rights;—but the attempted monopoly of that worst of all corporations, the sacerdotal clergy, is infinitely more unrighteous. Their spiritual tariffs—their restrictions

on the commerce of thought—their taxes on the bread of life—their systematic attempts to bring heaven itself into the market, to fill their coffers with filthy lucre—their mimic immolation of the Son of God himself, for a few pieces of silver—their nameless tyrannies, and endless exactions,—must surely soon rouse against them the indignation of an awakening world, unless they repent !

“ I affirm,” swears every Roman Catholic priest, “ that the power of indulgences was left by Christ to his church ; and, that the use of them is very helpful to Christian people.”* It were well, if Pius had told us when and where this power was granted and recorded. It is not my wish to dwell on the more disgraceful portions of Catholic history, in which the subject of indulgences forms as foul a chapter as any. Gladly should the abuses of the church be allowed to rest in oblivion, if they were ingenuously disowned by the clergy, as they are by many of the people. If past misdeeds and errors were acknowledged, we would willingly be silent. But, unhappily, Rome is among churches like the Pharisee among worshippers. She stands on her infallibility, and has nothing to confess. She neither fears God, nor regards men. Towards the former, she is impenitent—towards the latter, despotic. Like tyrant-kings, she can do no wrong ; and while all human institutions are advancing with the progress of society, she remains immovable, unchangeable, fixed in error and folly, like the *Celestial* regime of China,—while the tide of knowledge and freedom is rising around her. Her anchor is buried in the sand, and an iron cable binds her to the bottom of the stream. Could she break that cable, and become “ *fallible*,” free and reforming, all might yet be well ; if not, she must go down ! But, alas ! she will not cast overboard her racks and thumbscrews, and fetters and gags, nor will she wash out the martyrs’ blood that so deeply stains her deck. Oh that she knew, in this her

* Creed of Pius IV.

day, the things that belong to her peace; but now they are hid from her eyes!

It was taught by the schoolmen, and is still taught in the popular manuals of Roman Catholic divinity, (though denied by some controversialists,) that the merit of indulgences was derived from a treasury at Rome, composed partly of the merits of Christ, and partly of the merits of the saints—their works of *supererogation*, as if the atonement of Jesus needed something to eke it out, and make it sufficient for the wants of men! * This is, indeed, painting the lily of the valley, and illuminating the sun! This dogma supposes that a man can be justified by his works, and that his righteousness can exceed the requirements of the law. Paul held a very different doctrine. He declares, that “by the deeds of the law *no flesh* can be justified in his sight.” Oh, but that means the deeds of the *ceremonial*, not the moral law. By no means; Paul refers to the moral law—that law by which we have the “knowledge of *sin*,” and of which *sin* is the transgression: “for by the law is the knowledge of sin; for *all* have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” “Being justified freely by *HIS GRACE*, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”† Now, if if we are justified by the *moral law*, how could we be justified freely by God’s grace? How completely Paul silences all cavils on this subject:—“And if by grace, then it is no more of works”—(‘good works,’ of course)—“otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace, otherwise work is no more work.”‡

Now, suppose a man to have fulfilled the law perfectly, would he have whereof to glory? Certainly not before God. “So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all these things which are commanded you, count yourselves unprofitable ser-

* The mixture of human merit with that of CHRIST in the Papal fund, was taught by the Pope in his Jubilee Bull for 1825.

† Rom. iii. 20—24.—Read also ch. v. and Eph. ii. &c.

‡ Rom. xi. 6.

vants"*—that is, say some, unprofitable to God, but not to themselves, or to others. It is true, that our good works are advantageous to ourselves; obedience is happiness; we are blessed *in* the deed. They are also beneficial to our neighbours; and in this sense, not unprofitable to God, for "men see our good works, and glorify our Father who is in heaven." The word unprofitable, in this connexion, evidently means, *unmeritorious, undeserving*. It is the same that is applied (Matt. xxv. 10) to the slothful servant, who is bound and cast into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. The whole connexion shows that the servant who does *all* that was commanded, is entitled to no *thanks, deserves* no reward—because he does only what it was his *duty* to do. To come short of that is sin; to exceed it is impossible. God's demands upon us rise in proportion to our capacity—whatever we *can* do, we are *bound* to do. The standard of duty is summed up in a few words—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all* thy mind, and soul, and strength, and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."† If any man could boast an archangel's intellect, and a seraph's heart, what more could he do than this? The utmost effort of our power sustained throughout every waking moment of our existence, is due to our Creator and Redeemer. What human being has fulfilled his duty? What angel has exceeded the claims of the divine law? Not one! There is no *merit* even in the perfect service of the heavenly host, much less among the sinful children of the dust.

Shall we say, that an ardent zeal may outstrip the requirements of the law, and that by sacrificing lawful enjoyments, and by a thousand inventions of holy love, we may please God beyond what is commanded? I answer, first, if these volunteer services spring not from real love to God, they are acts of "will-worship," performed from sordid or mercenary mo-

* Luke xvii 10.

† Matt. xxii. 37.

tives, and will be met by the rebuke—"Who hath required this at thy hands to tread my courts?" Secondly, If they *do* proceed from love to our Saviour, that love is *due* to Him, to the utmost extent that it is possible to render it; and is, therefore, required by the law. Thirdly, If we can glorify God more by sacrificing houses, lands, country, friends, parents, even life itself, the law of love *demand*s the sacrifice—it is our duty. Fourthly, We must beware of vain-glory and self-will in this matter. The primitive martyrs were often carried to fanatical extremes. "Behold, to OBEY is better than sacrifice."*

In the primitive church the *discipline* was amazingly strict.† Persons who relapsed into idolatry, though under the influence of terror, at the stake, or in presence of the wild beasts, were excluded from fellowship; and it was disputed whether they should ever be restored. Even persons guilty of scandalous immoralities were obliged to confess their sins publicly in the congregation, and to remain outside in an attitude of humiliation, sometimes for many years. At length, it was found that these public disclosures of shameful crimes, scandalised the community, and led to bad consequences. To prevent abuses of this kind, Leo the Great, bishop of Rome, in the year 450, *allowed* secret confession to any priest the party might choose. Besides, at this time, the corruption of manners was so gross and general, and the disorders of society so great, that it was found impossible to adhere to the ancient discipline of a poor and persecuted, but a spiritual and independent church. Now Catholicism was established, and a flood of worldliness and wealth came in on the Christian ministry, leading to numerous devices to evade the force of moral obligation. Hence, the public penances were at first partially, and then generally, abandoned, proud penitents of rank re-

* 1 Samuel xv. 22.

† See the chapter on Purgatory, for a remarkable passage from Bishop Fisher on this subject.

fusing to submit to them; though sometimes a bishop of unusual courage and ambition humbled the haughtiest of them all; for they soon began to speak and to act in the spirit of a lofty ascendancy. However, auricular confession began to prevail rapidly. It relieved the sinner's impenitent remorse—it gratified the prurient curiosity—magnified the office, and ministered to the power of the priesthood. Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, published a *Penitential*, in which he casuistically described the different kinds of sin, with their aggravations, and the penances that should be enjoined. This tended to advance the influence of the confessional still more. It had become general through Europe in the age of Charlemagne, though it was not made a law of the church till the fourth Lateran Council under Innocent III., in the year 1215, when it was *first* enacted that every person should go to confession to his own parish priest—at least once a year.

Thus we see, that during the *first quarter* of the Christian era, private confession was unknown. It was introduced in consequence of the depravity of the age, and the degeneracy of the church in the 5th century; and was not established as one of the “commandments of the church” till the 13th century! The grand corner stone of the Papal system was laid by Leo I. Unquestionably its main support is the confessional; and when the people dare to confess directly to God, the infallible church will fall! Its enormous pretensions never could have been supported—perhaps never would have been conceived—had not this institution enabled the church to fix its grappling irons in every conscience.

When the power of absolution was conferred on the clergy, a number of cases was reserved to the bishops. Penances, to whose severity fresh crimes were adding every year, sometimes required a lifetime to perform them; and there are cases on record where a man had the goodly prospect of 300 years, to be spent in sackcloth and ashes! There being no likelihood of his living so long, some expedient was necessary to get rid

of the anomaly. This was done, first, by the bishop's remitting the penance in the form of an *indulgence*, the penitent commuting for the punishment, by giving a sum of money to the bishop for building, or for the poor, or for what he pleased; or by going on a pilgrimage to some distant shrine. These *indulgences* added greatly to the wealth and influence of the prelates. The Pope cast an evil eye on this as well as other episcopal privileges—at first claiming a share of the spoil, and then the whole. Some of the Pontiffs greatly *abused* this *abuse*, to feed their avarice, or support the imperial magnificence of their licentious court. They were also scattered about profusely, with the most demoralising effect, in order to excite and sustain the *crusades*—that marvellous epidemical infatuation, which agitated, and united, and partially civilized the feudal nations of Europe for two centuries—ushering in the revival of literature, which led to the Reformation of religion. All that was required to wipe out the old score of sins, was to enlist in the crusading army, which afforded to many an opportunity of gratifying their savage thirst for war and plunder. This was an indulgence to sin. It bestowed impunity on vice. Formerly, instead of holding forth the terrors of the Lord to persuade men to forsake their evil ways—instead of speaking of death, and judgment, and the wrath of God to the murderer or incendiary, he was threatened by the Vicar of Christ with the loss of 7s. 6d.! for this is really the sum set down in the Papal tax-book as the price of pardon for these crimes: it might be about 30s. or 40s. of our money. For this consideration the soul was loosed from a “deadly sin,” and the keys were ready to open heaven for the man that had the money. In those days it was as hard for a *poor* man to enter that kingdom, as for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, or a Pope to be virtuous.

Leo X. was a member of the illustrious house of Medici—a man of refinement, fond of pleasure, averse to business, and wholly devoted to the gaieties of a voluptuous court. He, as

well as many of the cardinals and aristocratic bishops of those times, when the taste for the ancient classics had been imported from the East, was a patron of literature and the arts—praise that is equally due to some of the greatest heathen despots. So long as genius basely ministers to the luxury and vices of “the great,” they will condescend to patronise him ; but, when he breaks his silken fetters, and asserts his independence—when the mind claims freedom of speech for its own burning thoughts—when learning becomes the nurse of liberty, as she was at the Reformation, teaching “her hands to war, and her fingers to fight”—then the thunders of despotic power are heard in the high places of the earth.

The habits of Leo’s court were dissipated and expensive ; his treasury was exhausted ; and in order to replenish it, and to enable him to build the church of St. Peter, he issued a bull of indulgence. The tax to be collected was farmed out to certain prelates in their several districts, and they employed the most fluent and least scrupulous preachers to laud and magnify the articles to be disposed of. Among these was Tetzal, a bold, unprincipled man, who proved himself a most zealous advocate. To such a length of extravagance did he go, that many even in that age were amazed. Others were filled with disgust and indignation, and among these was the “young doctor,” MARTIN LUTHER, then one of the most learned professors and popular preachers of the day, holding high authority as a monk in his own order. In his resistance to that rapacious tax-gatherer, was kindled the glorious flame of freedom which spread with prodigious rapidity through the nations of Europe, and will burn on (now that it is revived again) till all the corruptions of Christianity, and the reptiles that nestle in them, shall be utterly consumed !

We may judge of Tetzal’s sermon from his text. Here is the form of absolution which he used. It was signed, “Fr. Johannes Tetzal:—

“May our Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon thee, and

absolve thee by the merits of his holy passion. And I, by the authority of his Apostles, Peter and Paul, and of the most holy Pope, granted and committed to me in these parts, do absolve thee, first from all ecclesiastical censures, in whatever manner they have been incurred; and then *from all thy sins, transgressions, and excesses, how enormous soever they may be*, even from what are reserved for the cognizance of the Holy See; and as far as the keys of the holy church extend, I remit to thee all punishment which thou deservest in purgatory on their account; and I restore thee to the holy sacraments of the church, to the unity of the faithful, and to *that innocence and purity which thou didst possess at baptism; so that when thou diest*, the gate of punishment shall be closed—THE GATES OF THE PARADISE OF DELIGHTS SHALL BE OPENED. And if thou shalt not die at present, this grace shall remain in full force when thou art at the point of death. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.”*

Little did the courtly, sceptical, and careless Pontiff imagine, as he reclined on the couch of pleasure, that this bull which he signed in the plenitude of his power,—in the very lap of improvident security, would recoil upon his authority with paralyzing force, and that it would rouse whole nations to resistance. Much less did he think that he was about to excite to action one of the mightiest minds that ever stamped their character on society, and reigned over the opinions of posterity. Despotism had overacted its part. The patience of mankind, mistaken for acquiescence, was exhausted; the hidden thoughts of the people only wanted an interpreter—the thinking community an organ—suffering conscience a champion—and they found all in Martin Luther. When the friends of humanity and truth were desponding—when the night of superstition had darkened deepest, the morning gradually dawned upon the mountains, and the sun of truth began to shine in glory on the world.

* See Robertson's Charles V., B. 2nd.

Just suppose the Apostle Peter had met Tetzl—(the unfortunate man died in despair, tortured with remorse of conscience, and blasted by the execrations of society!)—suppose Peter met this wretch, how would he have addressed him? Would he not have said, as he did to Simon Magus, the inventor of indulgences—the man with whom the profitable idea originated of making money of the grace of God—would he not have said, “Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought THAT THE GIFT OF GOD can be purchased with money!”* There is not a man, woman, or child, whom the Church of Rome persuades to purchase an indulgence, or in any other way to *pay* for the pardon of sin, or for a sacrament, but she tempts to commit the sin of Simon Magus!—that is, to PURCHASE THE GIFT OF GOD WITH MONEY! Simon then was the father of this worst of heresies. This is the true *simony*. Peter knew nothing about such a connexion of cash with the blood of atonement. “For as much as ye know, said he, that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as *silver and gold*, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”†

* Acts viii, 20.

† 1 Peter i. 18, 19.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PREDICTED APOSTACY.

THE high church idolators of antiquity would do well to listen to the words of the wise man, "Say not thou—what is the cause that the former days were better than these? For thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this thing."* The former days of the church—when we pass down from the Apostolic age—were far worse than our own. The pure stream of Christianity soon mingled in its course with Gnostic philosophy, Brahminical superstition, Jewish formality, and Pagan polytheism. As the promise of a Saviour was contemporaneous with the curse pronounced on our fallen progenitors, so the "mystery of iniquity" began work almost as soon as the mystery of Redemption. As the gloom that wrapt the world when sin entered, was brightened from age to age by the Sun of Righteousness, so, that blessed luminary, as he ascended to the meridian, attracted a dense and blackening cloud of apostacy, which was broken and partially scattered at the reformation.

The rise and early prevalence of this apostacy, has been too little attended to by Protestants. Rome was charged with originating nearly all the corruptions of Christianity,—and in

* Eccles. vii. 10.

return, she traced many of her unscriptural dogmas and rites to a period of the church, deemed by Protestants, the purest; and was not this a strong and popular argument in her favour? Here Protestantism has laboured under a serious disadvantage, which Roman advocates knew well how to avail themselves of. Protestant historians, indeed, had found things in the primitive church which they did not like,—modes of thinking and speaking, forms and practices, not only alien to the Gospel, but subversive of its main principles; and, instead of honestly detailing what they found, they carefully culled any “garden flower” of evangelical truth and piety which they could detect “growing wild,” amid the dreary ruins and rank weeds that abounded where Apostolic Christianity once flourished; and for the rest, they endeavoured to apologise as well as they could. They saw the monkish perverters of the Gospel sainted in the calendar, and they thought it their duty to glorify those whom the church had canonised.

In more respects than one, this short-sighted prudence was pernicious. We are bad judges of utility, in the long run. Those who have cautiously concealed the truth, lest its publication should do mischief, have no faith in its power, and betray its interests. Had they brought to light the facts, and accounted for them, Christianity would, in due time, have vindicated itself.

If friends do not publish the truth, its enemies will. Why should it have been left to a Middleton and a Gibbon to reveal to the world that system of “signs and lying wonders,” which infatuated the “Catholic Church,” before “Popery” had a name, and were distinctly traced up to the *second century*? In the hands of such men, the inquiry served to cover a cowardly stab at the truth of the Gospel miracles;—in such hands as Mr. Taylor’s, it furnishes a new argument for the divine origin of the Christian system.

I. Neither our Lord nor his Apostles can be regarded as holding out a prospect of purity and glory to the *early* church.

A condition quite the reverse might have been expected, from the intimations they gave to their followers. I refer not to the "persecutions," which were repeatedly adverted to by the Saviour; because the trial of the church's faith, if she were in a right state of mind, would make it more pure and precious. The Apostles frequently refer, not to outward calamities, but internal corruptions, oppressions, and convulsions. Thus Paul says, in his charge to the elders of Ephesus—"I know this, that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also, of your own selves, shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."* And Peter says—"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who *privily* shall *bring in* damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction: and many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom *the way of truth shall be evil spoken of*; and through *covetousness shall they, with feigned words, make merchandise of you*."† It seems, too, that even in Peter's time, the pastoral office was desired for the sake of "filthy lucre." Jude writes nearly in the same strain. The Galatians had been "bewitched" by false doctrine, when Paul wrote his epistle to that church. Corinth was distracted by the factious predilections of its principal members, and by other gross disorders, ere their father in the gospel had been removed from the earth. The Colossians were in danger of being beguiled by a "voluntary humility and worshipping of angels," and the fancied merit of "neglecting the body." The Romans needed a strong warning against being "high-minded," and making the kingdom of God to consist in "meats and drinks and divers washings."

The prediction in 1 Tim. iv. is well known, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that some shall depart from the faith,

* Acts, xx. 29, &c.

† 2 Peter, ii. 1—3.

giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons ; speaking lies in hypocrisy ; having their conscience seared with a hot iron ; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created, to be received with thanksgiving of them who believe and know the truth." Again, " The time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine ; but, after their own lusts, shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears ; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and BE TURNED UNTO FABLES." *

" Let no man deceive you by any means : for that day shall not come (the day of Christ's second advent), except there come a FALLING AWAY first, and that MAN OF SIN be revealed, the son of perdition ; who opposeth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped ; so that he, as God, *sitteth in the temple of God*, showing himself that he is God. And now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time. For the MYSTERY OF INIQUITY DOTH ALREADY WORK : only he who now letteth will let, till he be taken out of the way ; and *then* shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming : even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders ; and with all deceivableness, of unrighteousness in them that perish ; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie : that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." †

1. The reader will observe, that the "mystery of iniquity" dates from the days of the Apostles. While Paul wrote, it was already working, and is *not*, therefore, *yet to be developed*.

2. Its full developement was prevented by a temporary ob-

* 2 Tim. iv. 3, 4, &c.

† 2 Thes. ii. 3—12.

struction, namely, the civil power, which continued for three centuries in a state of hostility. The "false prophet" could not work all his will without the magistrate's sword, and "the power of the Beast."

3. The "man of sin" can be identified with no heretical party. The "falling away" was not a departure from the VISIBLE church. The wicked one sat and reigned *in the temple*, and *there* claimed and received divine honours. This apostate power was no feeble heretical minority, like those parties which were cast out of the church under a curse, and gradually died away; it was a vast *ascendant, despotic system*, utterly licentious as to morals, but at the same time exquisitely sanctimonious, beguiling its victims with all "DECEIVABLENESS OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS."

4. It began to work in nearly all, if not all, the Apostolic Churches, before the death of their founders—rose gradually with the visible Catholic Church—experienced a wonderful expansion, after *proselyting* the secular power, and was consummated in the Papacy. The passages relating to it in the book of Revelation evidently identify it with *Rome*—the city on seven hills—as its principal seat. But it existed, in nearly all its elements, long before the Papal supremacy, as we shall see more clearly by and by. It is personified as "the man of sin," the "son of perdition,"—and at Rome, as the "mother of harlots," &c.; and it is to be destroyed by the "spirit" of the Redeemer's mouth, "and the brightness of his coming." Now, what is that spirit but his word; and what is that coming, but the power of his grace working with the truth—the Holy Spirit sent down to reign in the hearts of men?

I do not look for a *personal* reign of CHRIST, neither do I expect a personal *Antichrist*. I believe that Antichrist has been reigning for more than sixteen hundred years. One of his most successful devices, I think, has been to fix the minds of men on some terrific personage of that name, to appear at some future time. The wolf was in the fold, clothed as a

sheep, and he persuaded the shepherds that the enemy was coming at a distance, while he drank the blood of the flock without interruption. Our scholastic imaginations have invested the word "*Antichrist*" with a mystery that has done much to aid his delusions. 'This formidable power is among us, just as Satan is,—not clothed in visible terrors, as the vulgar paint him, but robed in light, and bearing a sacred name—his name is CHURCH.

Human nature always has had a tendency to add to the ordinances of religion, or pervert them. Will-worship is ever busy in devising new rights, and the fears of an ignorant mind, and a guilty conscience, are ever instigating the worshipper to abuse those which have been appointed by God. An unregulated imagination is most prolific of "thick-coming fancies," in those whose judgment is weakest. Imagination is the handmaid of the passions; and there is none of them she is more ready to obey than fear, especially when its forebodings stretch into the invisible world. She loves to hover in the regions of shadows, and to summon up spirits from the "vasty deep," as with the wand of an enchantress. These phantoms, whatever you may call them, "ghosts, goblins, spirits, or fairies," are apt to fly before the light of knowledge, which gradually gives to judgment the ascendancy that it ought to have, in the mental economy. It is to her, also, that superstition is indebted for her dreams, visions, and oracular intimations. This is the divinity that inspired all that was *honest* in the monkish legends of the dark ages, from which Rome has borrowed so many fooleries in the lives of her saints, and in her breviary. It is to this faculty also, and not to reason or conscience, or true spiritual sensibility, that an appeal is made in the pomp and splendour of worship—and in this the church has shown a deep knowledge of the human mind, as the heathens did before her. For she can boast nothing more gorgeous and imposing than what they set her the pattern of. In the most fascinating parts of her system she is but a copyist. Her gloomy

cathedrals, her lighted altars, her splendidly vested priests, her grand processions, her thrilling music, her multiform ceremonies, her unintelligible utterances, her numerous symbols, her many mysteries, her pageantry, and penances, were all devised before she was born. The long train of superstitions advancing from her temple gates in glittering or sombrous array, is formed chiefly of the progeny of fear and imagination, nursed in the bosom of ignorance, and educated by priestcraft.

“The weak soul within itself unblest,” turns naturally for relief to the spells of superstition. Timid, ill-boding, and unhappy, it is ever seeking consolation, where it finds only the food of anxiety. The sensibilities of such an one are easily excited; tears are ready to flow—sighs come unbidden—the heart is a fountain of sorrow. On such a mind it is easy for any spiritual quack to operate. It requires no talent to throw it into a state of hysterical excitement, to startle it with terror, soothe it into comfort, or raise it to short-lived raptures, which, like the dreams of the opium-eater, speedily leave it more miserable than ever. It holds the persons of men in admiration, and is awed by the slightest whisper of authority.

Nearly all men of irreligious lives are superstitious on their death-bed—and the more irreligious they have been, the more will their fears be excited now, and the more reliance they will place in forms and sacraments. Their minds are bewildered. The thought of a neglected God, against whom their whole life has been an almost uninterrupted course of rebellion, fills them with horror. They send for the priest, and implore the rites of the church. They are soon taught, (if not *very* poor,) that the church does not give her sacraments for nothing. But she does not say so, openly. She tells the perishing sinner, that by consecrating his property to the church and the poor, constituting the clergy, (of course,) his almoners, he can make atonement for his iniquities, and purchase the favour of God. *Death-bed repentance* may not have done much to people heaven, but it has done more than any thing else to en-

rich the church with splendid endowments, and to adorn it with costly buildings. The dying spendthrift or miser,—true to the intense selfishness that guided him through life, cares not for relatives or friends, provided he can escape the damnation which he dreads, and as they can promise him no passport to pleasure in the world which he is forced to enter, he gives his property to those who make such promises without scruple. In the profligate and superstitious ages (for the most superstitious ages have ever been the most profligate) which preceded the Reformation, the church extorted so many legacies from the fears of the dying, that she would soon have possessed all the estates in England, if the legislature had not interposed by enacting the statute of *Mortmain*, which rendered such alienations of landed property null and void, without the royal license.

Credulity has always fostered superstition. The sceptical and the credulous are often influenced by a common feeling in neglecting the truth, and that is passive indolence. They will not take the trouble to inquire, to examine, and judge for themselves; and the result is, that they depart from the truth in different directions. Credulity is fond of the marvellous,—swallows every absurdity,—believes every idle story of miracles and prodigies. This disposition is contagious, spreading rapidly from mind to mind, staggering even the judicious, and bearing away all the weak-minded and indolent in its progress. This is a sadly prevailing evil in the Roman Church. Witness the *Estatica* and *Addolorata* of the Earl of Shrewsbury—a narrative which should shame the boasted illumination of the nineteenth century.

The understanding is duped by the heart, and we persuade ourselves a thing is so, because we *wish* it. The people *will* be deceived, as a heathen said, and they are deceived, for they will always get teachers to their liking. If the creed of a prejudiced man happens to be right, it is so only by the accident of his birth or education. Had he been born

in Turkey or China, he would be as zealous for his system, as he is for that of the Pope, or John Knox, or Cranmer. The truth which is held in prejudice, is not truth to the mind where it is found in this degrading connexion. The man who *knows* the truth, has made it the subject of *thought*. He has examined, doubted, been convinced, by carefully weighing the evidence on both sides. He digs for it as gold, separates it from alloy, and keeps the precious, purified metal as his best treasure. Then it is *his own* treasure, which he values above all rubies. Those who glory in their churches, without considering candidly what has been said against them, may laud them as loudly as they please; but I defy them to shout more loud or long than did those who cried for the space of two hours—"Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" In boasting of the exclusive authority and excellence of the Church of Rome, as they all are, from the pulpits and presses, north and south, what are they doing but following the stupid example of these idolaters! They attempt to put down the Protestant world, by boasting of their antiquity and numbers! Why, the imperial religion of China, which is embraced by one-third of the human race, had flourished in its present forms,—at least a thousand years before they laid the foundation of the Papal metropolis! Compared with theirs, Catholicism is a mere mushroom beside an oak.

The vain-glorious and ambitious often practice and foster superstition to get themselves a name. They must make themselves notorious, and become the objects of admiration in some way or other; and being neither Solons nor Solomons, having nothing good to make them eminent, they are determined to attain distinction in the line of the Pharisees. They fast, make long prayers, utter devout exclamations, exhibit the whites of their eyes, and ostentatiously practise all the singularities of superstition. The conqueror of the world exclaimed, "If I were not Alexander, I would be Diogenes." In that same spirit, Simon Stylites mounted his filthy pillar, and

innumerable savage saints drew their stupid admirers after them into the desert, where, instead of labouring to be useful among their fellow-men, they cultivated the habits of wild beasts.

These sources of superstition, are found in human nature, and to them Protestants as well as Catholics are more or less exposed. The difference is, that the former generally condemn and resist them, while by the latter they are generally sanctioned and fostered. In every church, indeed, worldliness will try to make compensation for its want of goodness, by a punctilious formality, by an anxious scrupulosity about ceremonies, and by zeal in supporting an established system, as a mere "visible machine or national oblation." But, it is only in the Church of Rome, and by her mimics at Oxford, that these things are particularly enjoined as meritorious and expiatory. Hers is a religion peculiarly suitable for worldlings, because it is not merely a round of bodily exercises and mechanical observances, but it is pre-eminently, what above all things worldly men like, a system which enables them to be religious BY PROXY.

The principles and forms which give the character of superstition to the Church of Rome, have been borrowed partly from Gentile philosophy, from the exploded ritual of Judaism, and from Paganism. Traces of the false philosophy of the East are found in the writings of several of the Fathers, especially such as had been men of learning before their conversion, which was the case with those whose writings had the greatest influence. Their speculations, about the pre-existence of souls, about demons, about occult powers, and hidden essences in substances, &c., contributed powerfully to corrupt the simplicity of Christian doctrine, and are found operating still in the sacraments. This is the vain philosophy denounced by Paul.

The leaven, also, of Judaism began early to work in the Church. Paul detected its incipient operations in his own

day ; and he foresaw its issue in the fearful apostacy which followed when Christianity degenerated into a secular system of will-worship—when rites, infinitely more worthless than circumcision, were insisted on as essential to salvation. As the Apostles remained twelve years at Jerusalem before they entered on their mission to the nations, it happened that the gospel was carried to various places by the Jews that had been converted on the day of Pentecost ; and, as their short stay in that city did not afford them an opportunity of being sufficiently instructed in the new religion, it was, of course, mixed and coloured in their minds, with many of their previous notions and prejudices. The heavenly influence ran *in the old channel* of their long-formed religious habits, and was, of course, defiled. Hence, much of Paul's writings was occupied in separating the precious from the vile, in the minds of these persons and their converts, in the different cities which he visited, and the churches to which he wrote his epistles. No sooner had the inspired Apostles been summoned to their rest, than this tendency to corrupt the gospel began to manifest itself generally, to work rapidly. The pastors imitated the customs and manners, and even the dress of the Jewish priests, and made laborious efforts to amalgamate the two economies. It has been well remarked, that the Prophets of the Old Testament wrote in the Evangelical spirit of the New, while the Fathers of the ancient church seemed to be transported a thousand years back, and to be expounding the Covenant, which “gendereth to bondage.” Ceremony, pomp, and splendour, soon became, in their estimation, the chief things in the worship of God. An Oriental spirit of magnificence lavished its resources in decorating the temples, and adorning the tombs of the martyrs. The priesthood was exalted beyond measure ; and the people, so much respected by Apostles, were trodden down in the dust by the lordly pontiffs that boasted of Apostolic power. At last, the degenerate church, already an adulteress in heart,

was ready for the embrace of the world. The "Catholic Church" gave her hand to the Roman Emperor, dazzled by the splendid dowry which he offered her: the very same that Satan had presented to the view of Christ in the wilderness—"the kingdoms" of this world, and the glory of them! for these she sold the Saviour, and fell down and worshipped Mammon. There was nothing now to check the spirit of corruption, but everything to foster it. Nation after nation bowed before the *Crucifix*, in obedience to imperial decrees; or, as serfs and retainers, they followed the standards of their kings and chiefs. Hundreds were baptised in a day, and the barbarous tribes became Christians, without acquiring a single new idea, or relinquishing a single superstition. The clergy, indeed, managed to beguile them into the new creed—to allure them into the church, by giving Christian names to their deep-rooted customs, and trying to infuse the spirit of Christianity into the body of Paganism. But Paganism was not dead. The spirit, and power, and form remained: the names only were changed. The gospel brings with it light, and liberty, and thought, and love. It works internal changes: it produces a new creation. But, among the Pagan nations of Europe, which were *christened*, not *christianized*, old things were *not* passed, and hardly anything became new. The people clung to their customs, and cling to them to the present day. The hold of idolatrous rites on the soil of a country, is truly astonishing. They seem indigenous, and spring up perpetually like briers and weeds, until wholly eradicated by the most assiduous mental and moral culture. But such culture was unknown in the middle ages. The heathens, indeed, ceased to worship their idols; but, instead of adoring them as gods, they feared them as demons; and, as they believed that the earth and the air were swarming with these invisible, malignant beings, they remained bound in the thrawl of a gloomy superstition.

The saints of Catholicism assumed the thrones that had been abdicated by the fallen gods of Paganism. The very

images of the new divinities scarcely differed from those of the old, so slight was the change, so easy the transition. We learn from a Portuguese voyager, that when his countrymen went first to India, they discovered native Christians there, (called those of St. Thomas) and, that, when the priests of one of the chapels, as a proof of their being Christians, presented an image of the blessed Virgin, the hideous form resembled so much an inhabitant of the infernal regions, that one of the European officers, while, like his companions, he dropped on his knees, added the loud protest—that if the image represented the Devil, he paid his homage to the Holy Virgin.* I remember reading a similar account of the Spaniards in America: they went into a native temple, and mistaking one of the pagan idols for the image of their own Virgin, they fell down and worshipped it. Can it be, that Christianity and Paganism so nearly resemble one another, that an idolatrous temple cannot be distinguished by a stranger from a Christian place of worship? No; it is *not* Christianity that bears this suspicious resemblance to the system which it supplanted.

It was an unhappy circumstance that the Pope fixed his throne in the mystic Babylon. The *Pantheon* is *still* at Rome. Peter is exalted to the throne of Jupiter,—and the statue of the latter is dedicated to the former, only that the Keys of Heaven are substituted for the thunder-bolts of Olympus. There was in Rome, in pagan times, a college of Pontiffs, and a Pontifex Maximus. The one was the type of the college of Cardinals, the other of the Pope,—who is called the supreme Pontiff. The pagan predecessor of Catholicism at Rome, who has left so much of his furniture in the house, so many heir looms and relics, and whose spirit still haunts the scene, notwithstanding the holy water and exorcisms, things whose power he had often tried himself,—had also a system of religion, which could “restrain by terror, or gratify by

* Demonology and Witchcraft, p. 77.

indulgence; and while adapting itself to the lowest appetite of the multitude, could present suitable inducements to the intellectual, the imaginative, and the ambitious.”

Now, when the Roman powers became Christian in name, they should have become so in reality. Like Ephraim, they should have said,—“What have we to do any more with idols?” and they should have cast every religious image to the “moles and to the bats;” and required the converts to burn all the monuments and memorials of their idolatry,—as a good king of old broke the brazen serpent in pieces, when a superstitious use had been made of it,—and as Moses burned the golden calf formed to represent Jehovah, and made the people drink the dust of it mingled with water,—the only instance I can find in the Bible of people swallowing the object of their worship!

Let us see, however, whether we can detect the features of the “man of sin,” in the “Catholic Church” of the third and fourth centuries. In treading the dark scenes of this period, we shall be guided principally by the lamp which Mr. Taylor has put into our hands. No one has been able, successfully, to impugn his statements, or deny his facts.

II. Those, then, who should depart from the faith, it is said, would give heed to “seducing spirits,”—they would listen to foreign and seductive teachers. Now, there were tribes of philosophers in India and Egypt, called gymnosophists (naked philosophers); they were also called Πνευματικοί (spiritual), from their aversion to every thing *material*, and their incessant efforts to abstract their minds from earthly things, and become re-absorbed in the divine nature. They went almost naked, lived in caverns in the desert, abstained wholly from animal food, and also from marriage, seeking perfection in the annihilation of the passions. The Essenes seem to have mixed up these Gnostic principles with parts of the Jewish creed.

Many Christians, also, began early to follow their seductive

example. For, while the Fathers preached and wrote against this philosophy, falsely so called, they insensibly imbibed its principles and grudged Satan the advantage he enjoyed, in having them all to himself. The influence of this controversy was soon manifest in the interpretation of the Old Testament, which was explained in the manner of a *mythos*, to meet the sceptical objections of the philosophers. However, multitudes of the most serious professors of religion soon forsook the world, and retired to the wilderness, taking up their abodes in the deserted caves of the gymnosophists, the caverns of wild beasts, or the clefts of rocks.

We cannot wonder, that men of passive, contemplative minds, in an Eastern climate, should sigh to forsake the world, when weary of its toils, vexed with its cares, or shocked at its injustice, violence, and profligacy. Amidst the general dissoluteness of manners, and the disorder and rapine, which marked the decline of the Roman empire, it is no wonder that men and women, of tender and pensive spirits, should long to flee away and be at rest—that they should feel all the force of the sentiment uttered by the poet, when he exclaimed:—

“ Oh for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
Some boundless contiguity of shade,
Where rumour of oppression and deceit,
Of unsuccessful or successful war,
Might never reach me more!—My ear is pained,
My heart is sick, with every day's report
Of wrong and outrage, with which earth is filled.”

Even men of active minds, and in Northern climes, seem prompted, at times, to break loose from the fretting ties of society, and to evade the multiplying claims which a selfish world has upon them, and which all their efforts and industry scarcely enable them to meet.

We must think leniently then of the first Christian anchorets. Still they should have remembered the example of their

Lord, who went about doing good—of his Apostles, who bore the rude contact of an evil world, that they might bless men by their instructions and social influence. The soldier of the cross should not desert the path of duty, because it is encompassed with danger. Apostolic Christianity is active, practical, self-denying, benevolent. When “the lights of the world” went into the wilderness, of course the world was left in deeper darkness. When the “salt of the earth” was removed from the mass which it should have penetrated and purified, the process of corruption went on the more rapidly; and the salt, when thus collected in a heap, was subjected to an influence which deprived it of its savour, and made it fit only to be trodden under foot of men.

It was not the world alone that suffered by the passion for the monastic life—the monks and hermits themselves were its victims. “It is not good for man to be alone.” Female society softens our manners, refines our intellects, purifies our affections, enlarges our sympathies, and ennobles our sentiments. The martyrs of truth, and freedom, and philanthropy have not all come from the ranks of the *single*. Besides, the strongest minds are affected with much *solitude*. Thought preys on the soul for want of expression—imagination riots unrestrained—and, in the absence of contact with society, and collision with other judgments, the mind loses its symmetry, and good sense gradually expires. These, to say nothing of prurient fancies, stimulated by loneliness,* and uncorrected by experience,—or of passions irritated by the restraint of rash and oft-repenting vows,—would be enough to disqualify any man to be a judicious expounder of Scripture, or a safe guide in religion. And yet from this “school of the Prophets,” rose the most eminent of those Fathers whom the Oxford Divines consider the wisest of men, and whom they call on us to bow down to as our masters in theology!

* Even John Locke deemed the presence of a child a safeguard against sin.

What a contrast between the Nicene saints and the Apostles! *These* affected nothing singular in dress or manner. Their excellence was moral; it was in the inner man of the heart, and in their useful lives. Anthony, the patriarch of hermits, wore one sheep-skin for fifty years. Some of his unhappy followers condemned themselves to perpetual silence. Through their "voluntary humility and neglecting of the body," they allowed their hair to grow; and, glorying in their filth, were sometimes taken for bears and hyænas! A female anchorite deemed it a sinful conformity to the world to wash more than the tips of her fingers. The tendency, and indeed the avowed aim of this system, was to extinguish all "natural affection." Wives and children were abandoned, not only without remorse, but with the proud consciousness of having acted heroically. To marry was to lose caste in this new spiritual aristocracy, which had appropriated to itself all the most difficult precepts and most precious promises in the Bible, leaving the croud of vulgar Christians to a laxer morality and a lower reward.

Home and family were for ever abjured, and banished as an ungrateful and unhallowed thought from the mind! To provide for their own, and especially for their own household, would have been considered by these "successors of the Apostles" as a denial of the faith! One of them was induced to allow his dying sister to see him before she departed, according to her own earnest request. He complied, but as he had sworn never to look upon a woman, he stood at the cottage door, *with his eyes shut*, exclaiming,—*"Sister, look on me!"* and then fled back to the desert. It was natural that many of these frantic beings should rush forward as volunteer martyrs, and court the rage of persecution. This was a sure way to be canonised and worshipped after death; or, if the "confessor" escaped, he became the haughty censor of the church, and resisted bishops with impunity.

As to the "doctrines of devils," or *demonology*, the church was full of it during the third and fourth centuries. It was

believed that the fallen angels had become the gods of heathenism—that they frequently also took possession of men and women. They were tortured, however, and cast out by the touch of a martyr's bones; or by the sight of the shrine where they were deposited. Awful ceremonies of this kind were practised in the most celebrated churches, in which such men as Chrysostom and Athanasius were the chief actors! Every child was supposed to be possessed by an evil spirit till it was baptised. The Council of Carthage, anno. 256, decreed, therefore, that exorcism should precede baptism. How very ancient then is the present superstition in Ireland, both among ignorant church people and Roman Catholics upon this subject! Had the Rev. Mr. Carroll, who killed a child in Wexford, while endeavouring to cast a devil out of it, flourished in the third century, he would have been canonised as one of the great thaumaturgues of the age, instead of being shut up in a lunatic asylum for life! But, alas for the Puseyites, this is a degenerate age! There is little faith now even in Ireland, although the *Quarterly Review* says there is more in it (among the Roman Catholics) than in any nation in Europe; and, therefore, Oxford Christians look on it with most hope.

When the new converts from heathenism ceased to worship their gods, they feared them as devils, and fancied that they were haunted by them continually. But the void left was soon filled up. The death of the martyrs was annually celebrated. Festivals were held on their graves in honour of their “*birth-days to heaven*”—their entrance into rest and glory. Their departed spirits were prayed to as intercessors together with the Apostles, and chiefly the “Mother of God,” “always virgin.” As a matter of course they were worshipped, and their relics were venerated, as well they might, for, according to the rule of this “brightest” age of the church, these relics, bones, nails, or ashes, wrought innumerable miracles.

The tombs of Peter and Paul, on the Vatican and Ostian roads, were devoutly visited by kings and emperors. Many

supposed bodies of the saints were dug up in the provinces, and carried to Rome or Constantinople. Samuel the prophet was brought from the Holy Land in the *third century*! His ashes were put into a golden vase, covered with a silken veil. The high ways from Palestine to Constantinople were covered with an almost uninterrupted procession. This was a treasure more valuable than gold, more precious than rubies. Indeed, the martyrs' bones were in themselves an inexhaustible mine to the church: hence, they were fabricated in myriads. The *true cross* was hidden from the eyes of men and bishops for three hundred years, when miraculously discovered and indubitably identified as that on which the Saviour (not one of the thieves*) expired, it multiplied prodigiously, and chips of it were found in nearly all holy places throughout Asia, Africa, and Europe. At Tours, however, it was discovered that the people had been adoring the bones of a malefactor instead of a saint. A certain bishop could not rest on his bed while the worshippers in his church were perplexed in their homage by the fact, that Arian bones were mingled with the orthodox under the church floor. Hence, the latter were separated by the good father, and placed in a shrine by themselves. We are not told by what test he ascertained the orthodoxy of bones.

The following wonders are recorded in no less an authority than *St. Augustine's City of God*:—Lucian, a presbyter of Jerusalem, related a dream. A venerable figure stood before him—an old man with a long beard, clothed in a white robe,

* This was affected by a miracle. One account states that a dead man was raised to life, by the touch of the true cross, while the others had no effect. Alban Butler's story is, that a dying lady of distinction was instantly restored to health. The good Bishop and his assistants, in this fraud, had every thing nicely arranged to confirm the faith of the Empress, who had then visited Jerusalem, and to induce her to build them a church. They also found the crown of thorns, the sponge, the nails and spear!—all lying snug and dry together for 326 years; but now discovered of course, by a vision!

and holding a gold rod in his hand. He said that his name was Gamaliel, and that himself, and Stephen, and Nicodemus, were lying unhonoured in a neighbouring field. Other visions followed. At length the bishop, and a long train of ecclesiastics, visited the sacred spot. The bones of Stephen, the protomartyr, were solemnly removed; a church was built to his honour; and it is needless to add, that it was crowded by “the faithful.” His finger or toe, or even the scoopings of any bone in his body, wrought the most stupendous miracles throughout the Christian world. There was “method” in Lucian’s dreams.

Here are fair specimens of the boasted Apostolic traditions.* Augustine, it is well known, was one of the most illustrious of the Fathers—one of the wisest of Professor Sewell’s “wise-men, who lived fifteen hundred years ago;” and not only he, but all his *brother* “Fathers,” by the whole weight of their authority, and all their episcopal influence, sanctioned and encouraged these impieties and fooleries.

When such things were done in the ancient church—when “Catholicity” was in its highest splendour, it is not strange that they should be imitated in later times. Lewis IX. once brought a cargo of relics from Constantinople to Paris. It contained the following articles, viz.:—The crown of thorns worn by our Saviour at the crucifixion; part of the true cross; the baby linen of Jesus; the lance that pierced him; the sponge in which vinegar was presented to him, &c.;—also, the rod of Moses, and the skull of John the Baptist. The King carried the crown barefooted, and in his shirt, through the streets of Paris.

Who can contemplate the system of sanctimonious knavery

* The Rev. Dr. Robertson, in his *Biblical Researches in the Holy Land*, has demonstrated that the “successors of the Apostles,” at Jerusalem, have been mistaken, by about a mile, as to the spot from which our Lord ascended! They are astray even as to the *whereabouts* of Mount Calvary! Their churches are the monuments of their ignorance or fraud.

that prevailed in the third and fourth centuries, and was handed down improved to subsequent ages, without feeling the awful force of the Apostle's words—"SPEAKING LIES IN HYPOCRISY?" This was the case with many, and not least with THE FATHERS, such as Chrysostom, Augustine, Athanasius, Jerome, and indeed all the magnates of the Nicene church. Those who were not conscious of fraud, and yet took part in these delusions, were surely "GIVEN OVER TO STRONG DELUSION TO BELIEVE A LIE!" In the arts of deception the Jesuits themselves never surpassed the saints of the Catholic Church in the ante-papal period of its existence. They forged documents—they issued fabulous books with the names of eminent men departed—they invented monstrous legends, and got up false miracles by the legion! Truly they could not bear sound doctrine, but were "TURNED UNTO FABLES!" Dreams, visions, revelations, were the order of the day. Nothing that the wildest imagination of the most maniacal solitaire could fabricate, was too extravagant for the preternatural credulity of the people in that age of religious insanity! And yet, when we go fish for Apostolic traditions, it is into this gulph that we must cast our net.

They were sound divines, forsooth!—"workmen that needed not to be ashamed!" A companion of the wonder-working Paul, the hermit, called God to witness, that for many years he had never seen the holy man stretch his legs! This same Paul received half a loaf daily for sixty years from a crow! One day he had a visiter, and the considerate bird, remembering, I suppose, that a hermit should be hospitable, brought a whole loaf instead of a half. From what bakery these supplies were obtained by the crow, the history does not tell.

Ammonius, another hermit, who had arrived at a condition of most savage sanctity, had one of his ears cut off close to the skull, to avoid being made a bishop, a neighbouring church having invited him; but as their importunity still continued, he put an end to it, by threatening to cut out his tongue! This

was *nolo episcopari* with a vengeance. A friendly and penitent hyæna brought a sheep-skin to the “blessed Macarius,” in gratitude for curing one of her little ones. This woolly garment was worn by the holy man for forty years, and was bequeathed to *saint* Athanasius, so celebrated in the annals of orthodoxy. This holy relic was not of the cleanest, for hermits were too “angelic” for soap and water. But Athanasius, the great light of the Nicene church, received it with reverence, and preserved it with the most pious care.

The same illustrious man did not think it beneath the episcopal dignity to give special instructions to one of his most highly esteemed nuns, as to the way in which she should perform the duties of the toilet. She was to wash her face with both her hands, and she was not to spend much time in decorating her charms, or displaying them before the mirror, lest the angels, who were hovering about this sanctuary of unveiled beauty, should be tempted to sin, as were once the “sons of God” by the daughters of men. (Gen. vi. 2.)* But it would be an endless task to enumerate the fantastic stories of this *fabulous age* of the church. It has been remarked truly by Mr. Taylor, that in this respect, as well as in others, the Catholicism of the dark ages was an improvement upon that of the fourth century; and Popery was a reform of ancient Christianity. The most extravagant legends in Alban Butler’s *Lives of the Saints*, were written by the most eminent and sober-minded doctors of the Nicene Church; and ere they were fitted to appear in an English dress, it was found necessary by the modern compiler to lop off the most monstrous parts. Those who have read the *Glories of Mary*, and the *Miracles of Philomena*,† (works intended for the meridian of Italy) will have some idea of the religious literature of the age, when the Fathers reigned in the church—for nothing is more

* This text is frequently quoted, and applied thus by the Fathers.

† To these may be added the prodigies lately imported by Lord Shrewsbury.

like the state of things which obtained in those ages, than the mingled superstition and profligacy that now prevails in the parts of Europe, where the Protestant religion has not penetrated.

Their consciences, in those early times, were, indeed, "*seared as with a hot iron.*" They received not the love of the truth; and in the midst of the most painful austerities, they had pleasure in unrighteousness. They had the Scriptures, but they spent all their perverse ingenuity in wresting them to their own destruction. Not only were the plainest Scriptural duties openly and systematically violated, but the very instincts of humanity were extirpated from the heart. When they became saints, they ceased to be men; and the strange fire of their zeal consumed every remnant of natural affection that lingered in their breasts. Having separated religion from morality, with them bodily exercises were every thing—virtuous dispositions nothing. In common with the Hindoo and Persian, the delightful privilege of prayer was regarded by the ancient Catholic as a task and a penance; and their petitions to heaven were counted by knots or pebbles, and were not unfrequently interrupted by profane exclamations. Swearing by the name of JESUS was a common vice of the fourth century, both in the eastern and western churches.

The study of "profane books," or secular literature, was forbidden by a canon of the Council of Carthage, in the year 394. The "Book of Martyrs," and the "Lives of the Saints," began to be the public reading of the church, by which the people were inflamed with fanaticism, and stimulated to the wildest credulity. In the year 529, the small remnant of Greek philosophers were banished by an edict of Justinian, which closed the schools of Athens for ever,—an act of barbarous tyranny which would have disgraced Christianity more, if these schools were now anything better than academies of sophistry. But, in reference to the Fathers—the reigning spirits of these times—we may ask, is it possible to respect an authority proceeding from such a quarter?

In such a state of things, a boundless credulity swallowed every fabrication; and the various thaumaturgues vied with one another in the invention of "lying wonders." With "great swelling words of vanity" did they magnify the most popular saints, till they were admired as gods, and worshipped. The "Mother of God" was adored as the all-powerful Queen of Heaven; and Apostles and martyrs were expressly recognised, indeed sometimes formally appointed, and always earnestly invoked, as intercessors. The martyr, whose bones were enshrined in a church, was requested to "remind Peter and excite Paul," to enter heartily into the work of mediation for their salvation from some impending calamity; or, his power was invoked, for the expulsion of some troublesome demon.

Shall we have the *Exorcists* restored among the orders of the hierarchy? It would seem so, for, among the Tracts for the Times, there is one on the evils of neglecting this very ancient rite. Of course, we shall soon hear of the Church of England clergy casting out devils; and, as witches were never wanting, in times when witchcraft was prosecuted, so, when *Exorcism* becomes popular, we shall have demons in most edifying numbers, yelling in our cathedrals, torturing the bodies of the faithful, and flying away at the sign of the cross or the name of Jesus. To meet an emergency of this kind, the Anglicans should be laying by a store of martyr's bones, not forgetting the dust of St. Thomas à Becket, and the toe and finger-bones of that glory of modern saintship, Archbishop Laud!

Indeed, if the Nicene *traditions* be followed, we shall have many new things introduced among us. Church people must pay a scrupulous attention to the points of the compass, and always pray towards the east: for this custom was so general among the ancient Christians, that the heathens thought they worshipped the sun. Tertullian* argues, that it is a sin to

* De Coron. Mill.

worship God *kneeling*, on Sundays and certain festivals. Cyprian* assures us, that *infant communion* prevailed among the churches of Africa, and one instance is recorded, in which the deacon was obliged to pour the wine down the child's throat by force. Throughout the whole Catholic Church, it was customary for the *deacons* to take portions of the bread and wine to the *absent* members. A *crumb* of the bread was also thought to possess the miraculous virtue of preserving the possessor from shipwreck, fire, and other calamities. The simple institution of "breaking bread," in commemoration of the Redeemer's sacrifice, was gradually changed into a pantomime, designed to represent his death, and the cruciform loaf, pierced with a spear, was elevated to be adored by the people; while ambitious orators exhausted their powers of bombast in exalting the "tremendous mysteries." Thus they "crucified the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

As to the rite of baptism, there was no limit to its virtues. According to St. Chrysostom, it "made the sinner *just* in a moment." "Though a man," said he, "should be foul with every vice, the blackest that can be named, yet, should he fall into the baptismal pool, he ascends from the divine waters purer than the beams of noon."—"Not only made clean, but holy and just."

Thus were the "divine waters" of baptism substituted by THE FATHERS for the blood of Christ,—the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. And such were the patristic notions of *justification*! No wonder that the calculating sensualist put off his baptism, as Constantine did, to the hour of his death, that he might avoid the burden of the cross till the moment of receiving the crown, and pass, *per saltum*, from the mire of iniquity, "the blackest that can be named," to the presence of Christ, and the glory of heaven!

* De Lapsis.

But, where this remedy was not at hand, the accommodating Fathers supplied others equally facile. It is from the commentaries of these gentry, that we are to gather the meaning of Scripture; their supplemental traditions come in to fill up the volume of inspiration, and, as the postscript of a letter is said to be sometimes the most important part of it,—so their appendices, and running notes, according to our Oxford divines, determine the import of the *written* part of God's word. Chrysostom was one of the most eminent of the Fathers, and he agrees in doctrine with his most celebrated contemporaries, as well as with their immediate successors. Let us, then, hear his *dictum* on the parable of the virgins:—'The fire in the lamps, what is it, according to this authority? "Virginity," that is, the state of celibacy. And what is "the oil in the lamps?"—the grace of God, or the influence of the Holy Spirit? No.—"Almsgiving!" "Hast thou a penny," exclaims this great light of the Nicene Church, "hast thou a penny—purchase heaven! . . . Heaven is on sale, and in the market, and yet we mind it not. . . . Give a crust, and take back paradise! Alms are the redemption of the soul!" *

I remember, when an expression of the late Dr. Doyle,—*"Purchase up your iniquities with alms,"*—excited great indignation among the Protestant clergy; but some of the loudest in condemning his heretical doctrine, are now ready to swear by the authority of those "saints" with whom the Roman prelate agreed to the very letter. Need any more be said, to show that the church authorities of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries departed, essentially, from the principles of Christianity—that they not only shifted the foundations of acceptance and peace with God, but even subverted the principles of evangelical law and social morality. *Their Gospel*

* See a lengthened examination of the writings of this Father, in *Ancient Christianity*, vol. I.

differs as much from the Apostolic, as liberty differs from slavery, truth from delusion, intelligent piety from superstition, or philanthropy from malignant, intolerant fanaticism. But, Paul says to the Galatians—"Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."†

Who that considers the subject, can doubt that the curse of religious bondage to human taskmasters came upon the Nicene Church? The great aim of all their institutions, at least their obvious tendency, was to break down the minds and consciences of the people to the most abject submission to *men*. When a professor of singular sanctity had no mind, no will of his own—when he rendered to his religious "superiors" a passive, blind, beast-like obedience, then his virtue was deemed *perfect*. Sometimes these holy machines were ordered to plant trees, with the branches in the ground, and the roots in the air, or daily to water a withered stick, as if it were a living plant; but it matured not what humiliating and preposterous task was imposed: the more humiliating and preposterous, the higher the merit of performing it. They never asked whether God had required these things at their hands; the bishop or the abbot was their god. Towards the Deity they had no conscience—towards their spiritual lords, no understanding,—being held, "like the horse or mule, with bit and bridle."

Held they were, firmly enough, in this stupid insensibility to their rights as Christian men, and their responsibility to their Creator and Redeemer,—but not restrained from vice. How could they, when the worst passions of our nature assumed the mask of religion, and were idolised by the church? Depravity cannot prevail in one part of the moral system, without injury to the whole; nor will one devil, when safely lodged in the sanctuary of the soul, be satisfied without bringing in seven others more wicked than himself. We have

* Gal. i. 8.

already adverted to the disorders and vices of the “most illustrious portion of the flock of Christ”—“the flower of the church,” as the great Fathers proudly styled the male and female “*virgins*,” whose delinquencies scandalised even a grossly dissolute and degenerate age. If such was the condition of the aristocracy, what must have been that of the plebeians of the church—the vulgar mass of baptised heathens? It is described by themselves as the most demoralised that can well be imagined. The Fathers themselves lament that the Christian Romans were the worst conducted part of the community—that the Goths and Vandals, Pagans and heretics, were far superior in morality, and in all social virtues! Indeed, so disorganised was the frame-work of society, through oppression, fraud, perfidy, murder, rapine, combined with all that is profligate and lewd in private manners, that multitudes fled for refuge from this fearful anarchy, to the heretical “barbarians!” And the invasion of Mahomedanism, was regarded by many as a purifying deluge, sweeping over the lands which the great apostacy had darkened and polluted!

Because our Lord has said, that *in heaven* they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are “as the angels;” therefore, these sapient divines set up for angels *on earth*, overlooking the difference between the two states of existence, as of no moment in the calculation. Paul deemed a single life expedient during the “*present necessity*,” that the soldiers of the cross should not, during seasons of persecution and public calamity, be entangled in the affairs of this life. But the same Apostle declares, that if, even in *such unsettled times*, they marry, they have not sinned. He also says, in reference to widows, “I will, therefore, that the younger women marry,—bear children,—guide the house,—*give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully*.” Again, “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled.” And in reference to the clergy, he says, “A bishop must be the husband of one wife;

one that ruleth well *his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity.*" Observe the rational ground of this requisition—"For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?"* No, no; it is not in the gloomy and comfortless cloisters of compulsive celibacy, but in the happy precincts of the domestic circle, that a minister can acquire the wisdom, the sympathy, the pure and tender sensibility, the paternal solicitude, and sober, practical, benevolent piety, necessary to the overseer of a Christian Church. It is about as wise to expect that continence will result from the prohibition of marriage, as that prudence and the proprieties of life will be best learned in the wilderness.

That men drafted from this latter school to fill episcopal thrones, should prove wise rulers of the people, would be quite as miraculous as any thing recorded in their legends! What symmetry could be expected in the Christian character of such men? Would not their zeal naturally run to excess in one direction, disturbing and disarranging the whole system of theology, magnifying the subordinate into the principal, and putting that first which should be last? Such we find to have been the fact. Their piety, when not a mere mechanical observance of the cumbrous ceremonial with which their uncurbed fancies had loaded the church, was one-sided, preposterous, exaggerated, strained, and, of course, in the highest degree arrogant and self-righteous. Hence, their ascetic moroseness—their excessive abstinence—the halo of vain-glory with which they surrounded a sanctimonious celibacy—too often but a cloak for the most revolting licentiousness, and the most awful sophistication of conscience. Hence, also the supernatural virtue supposed to reside in the *opus operatum* of the sacraments, and the pre-eminent merit of almsgiving. So completely had they excluded religion from the sanctuary of

* Luke xx. 35; 1 Cor. vii. 28—36; 1 Tim. vii. 14; 1 Tim. iii. 2, 5 12; Tit. i. 6.

the conscience—so thoroughly divorced it from the “hidden man of the heart,” that it became the *habit* of the church to pray without thought, to confess without sorrow, and do penance without repenting.

But all had not been seduced by this “mystery of iniquity.” There was still left “a remnant, according to the election of grace”—the church in the wilderness—scattered and obscure, but still retaining their fidelity to the Lord that bought them, and witnessing that he is God. The corruptions of Christianity came down gradually from the high places of ecclesiastical authority, and insensibly penetrated the mass of the Christian community; and as the surface of the snow-drift on the road side is stained and darkened, while the heart for a time retains its purity, so was it with the ancient church. Remote from the dusty highways of hierarchical ambition, were found many a congregation and district pure in the faith, and many an humble and pious pastor pursuing “the noiseless tenor of his way,” and preaching the GOSPEL in substance, to men who received the truth in the love of it, and, in some good measure, reduced it to practice.

Meanwhile, large communities of sound hearted and devoted Christians, were excluded from the so-called “Catholic Church,” branded with various names of “Heresy,” on account of some metaphysical and unintelligible *iota*; and, as in civil history, the disastrous glory of war flashes its lurid light on almost every page, while the progress of society and the condition of the people, are cast into the shade, so has it been here:—records of the pride, and pomp, and strifes of ambitious ecclesiastics, have been handed down to us as the history of the Church of Christ!

CHAPTER XII.

CELIBACY AND MONACHISM.

GREAT stress is laid by churchmen on what is called the unanimous consent of the Fathers. Surely such men cannot have studied the history of those Fathers, nor attended to the motives from which imperial edicts were issued to bring councils together; nor to the manner in which majorities were secured in these assemblies. It must be admitted, however, that the Fathers were sometimes unanimous; but it was in the work of mischief that they were so—in propagating the worst abuses of Christianity.

Their wonderful unanimity on the subject of this chapter is thus noticed by Dean Waddington:—"It is a fact demanding observation, that the Fathers of the ancient church, who flourished about this period (in the fourth century) among whom were many eloquent, and learned, and pious men, were favourable, *without one exception*, to the establishment of MONASTICISM; for though it might be beneath the office of reason to investigate the motives of the illiterate enthusiasts who began the work, it would be improper to pass over without comment the considerate labours of the ecclesiastics who completed it. Moreover, as they were apt enough to differ on some other points, in which the interests of religion were concerned, and as they delivered on all occasions their particular opinions with

great boldness and independence, their unanimity in the introduction of one grand innovation, is by that circumstance still further recommended to our attention. . . . We should, moreover, in attempting to account for this agreement, always bear in mind, that the early patrons of monasticism were, with very few exceptions, Orientals or Africans—men of ardent temperament and impetuous imagination; among whom the theory of religion too frequently tended to mysticism, and its practice to mere sensible ceremony, and bodily mortification.”*

In consequence of this ominous revolution in the sentiments of the professing church, the holy estate of matrimony was renounced by all who aspired to a character for eminent sanctity. Thousands forswore it, and retired from temptation to the wilderness, or the monastery, carrying with them a plague of the heart, for which marriage is the divinely appointed remedy. Hence, also, hundreds of married men abandoned their wives and families, thus breaking through the most sacred obligations to win the praises of an apostatising church. Aspiring to be angels, they sunk below the level of men—and unnaturally sacrificing the endearments of hallowed domestic affection, they vainly sought a compensating relief in solitary, remorseful vice; or amid the social abandonment of the convent, in those secret haunts of unblushing sin, where conscience and natural affection lie buried together.

Even Catholic writers describe the convents of the middle ages as brothels of licentiousness. And St. Bernard, in the 12th century, is obliged to confess and lament that “*episcopi et sacerdotes faciunt quæ non conveniunt.*”—Again, “*quæ enim in occulto fiunt ab episcopis, turpe est dicere.*”† When con-

* Church Hist. c. xix. p. 369. The same writer observes, that celibacy was considered a *heresy* in the times of Irenæus.

† Bernard in Con. Rhem. 1728. See Edgar, ch. 15, *passim*, for a full account of Dr. Pusey’s “*more excellent way.*” Yet Costerus and others maintained that such men would *sin more grievously if they married!!*

vents are multiplying, and Rome is making clerical converts, the public should get some idea of the ripened fruits of celibacy.

The first council that “forbid” marriage to the clergy was that of Eliberis in Spain, in the year 305. The Council of Neocesarea, in 314, decreed that every priest who would marry should be degraded. The first Council of Nice, which was held in 325, would have forced all the clergy to put away their wives, but for the strenuous interference of Bishop Paphnutius, who, though himself a single man, opposed this abominable measure, and prevented its passing. The public opinion, however, and custom of the church, enforced by the restless and intolerant fanaticism of the monks, was more powerful than law, and accordingly every married minister was looked down on as vile and degraded. A few nobly protested against this feature of the apostacy, but their voices were silenced by ecclesiastical fulminations; and the fierce denunciations of the monkish Prelates bore all before them.

But such shocking outrages of the laws of nature and of revelation were not suffered to pass with impunity. The social affections, thus turned by ecclesiastical interdicts from their holiest channel, found other issues, dark and foul, and defiled all that they touched. “Nuns” protected by their vows, dressed gaily, put on every meretricious art, *exposed* themselves in public *promiscuous baths*, frequented the theatres, where the grossest scenes were exhibited—flirted with their monkish paramours, who were frequent at their sides, even in the church, and during the celebration of the holy mysteries. They also lived together in the same religious houses; and it was notorious to the great scandal of the church, and grief of the Fathers, that they also slept together, though under solemn assurances that nothing worse than Christian affection should be the re-

* The public condemnation of this practice contributed to Chrysostom's banishment from Constantinople.

sult ! * True, these holy women were not called wives, (that word was detestable,) but “sisters” and (αγαπῆ) “darlings.” Never was their vow of virginity to be broken. But their virginity was not that of the heart—it was outward, formal, factitious, *physical*. And even the bishops, who publicly lamented these “abominations,” seemed to know so little of real purity, that numbers of these “easy, fond, familiar,” intrepid virgins—in climates too where heroic chastity is rare—were compelled as a preparation for communion, to submit to a most humiliating test.*

But it is painful even to refer to so odious a subject. The fact is, that corruption ran to such an excess, that money was devoted to the endowment of *religious* houses from the most detestable motives. Men of property, in the vigour of life, erected institutions of this kind, of which they were constituted governors, and into these sanctified dens of pollution youth and beauty were inveigled, to the destruction of innumerable souls.

It is next to impossible for the uninitiated to conceive the deprivation of the moral feelings that came, in the rapid progress of corruption, to be associated with monastic *devotion*. By one sex the “Queen of Heaven” has been regarded with burning passion, as any one may see by reading the “*Glories of Mary*,” where a saint is represented as “dancing before her image in the holy folly of his love !” These delusions of the day—these waking dreams of an unhallowed imagination, blind to the boundary line which separates veneration from irregular emotion, giving its own colouring, and life, and warmth to the painting or the statue, and exciting the worshipper to exclaim with St. Bernard—“O dulcis osculando !”—these day dreams would be followed, of course, by kindred visions of the night. With similar physical feelings—perhaps more shocking still—was the HOLY SAVIOUR regarded by the mock virgins immured in nunneries ! It appears from the reluctant testimony of one of their own bishops, even in very

* See Tailor’s Ancient Christianity, vol. I, passim.

modern times, that the host itself did not escape unutterable desecration. No wonder these prison-houses are so well guarded. It is to be feared that many of their wretched, imbecile inmates are "given up to work all uncleanness with greediness." In the regulations of a convent at Constantinople, it was ordained that all the males employed about it should be eunuchs.

The monastic system, with its essential law of celibacy, is so constitutionally, so radically vicious, that no reform has ever been able to cure it. In the East, its abuses were always notorious and enormous. In Western lands, with colder climes and sterner virtue, they sought by a series of reformations—but sought in vain—to redeem these institutions from their inherent depravity. Every one of them began with utter poverty and rigid sanctity, and rapidly rose to renown and opulence; but still more rapidly sunk into fat indolence, fastidious luxury, and coarse sensuality.

Some eminent Protestant writers have, indeed, given them credit for being the only depositaries of learning in dark times, and have lauded them, because they

"Curbed the wild fury of a barbarous age,"

at a time when society was threatened with utter dissolution. Few will deny that the worst despotisms do something to alleviate the calamities which themselves have brought upon the people. A capricious munificence, a courtly elegance, a dazzling grandeur may attract the eye from a nation's wretchedness, and plant flowers on the grave of liberty—just as the pomp of war, and martial music, and the shouts of victory, shed a delusive glory on the blood-stained battle-field, and drown the groans of dying fathers, sons, and husbands. Shall we, therefore, sing the praises of despotism and war? The Church of Rome brought night upon the moral world by excluding the Sun of Righteousness, and is glorified by Protestants, because she dispelled a portion of the gloom, by kindling her own bale-

ful fires of fanaticism and superstition! It is even insinuated that Christianity would have perished from the earth, but for the *church* organization, the ecclesiastical institutions of the fourth century. How then did it survive the Roman persecutions, and rise to such influence as made it politic for the imperial despot, Constantine, to feign devotion to the cross! Oh, but it is said, though it could withstand a stupendous and bloody tyranny, it could not exist amid the anarchy that succeeded the fall of the empire. Well, if the Gospel, in its native purity and power, had shone upon that chaos, would it not have reduced it to order, and speedily developed the elements of civilization? See what it has done for the self-destroying cannibals of the South sea islands. Had it been left to the individual convictions of men, and to its own uniting, liberating, elevating, and purifying tendencies, would it not have saved Europe from centuries of ignorance, slavery, barbarism, war, and vice? The Nicene Church system was a dense cloud, that averted the light of heaven from the nations, and turned them into a desert; and if the drops that fell from it produced here and there a sickly vegetation, and if from behind "the gloomy hills of darkness" the beams of truth gleamed forth occasionally, shall we praise Rome for *that*? Above all, shall we praise the monastic system?—a system of which one of its ablest apologists is compelled to speak in the following terms:—

"At the same time, we ought not to forget, that even in those times to which their utility was confined, it was continually obstructed, both by the original defects of their system, and its consequent corruptions. Almost from the first establishment in the East, no less than in the West, we find them the faithful defenders, if not parents, of *superstitious abuse*. The adoration of saints, the miraculous qualities of relics, and the homage due to them—and, above all, the sanctity and worship of images, have been inculcated with peculiar zeal by the monks of every order, in every age of the church. Again, as they *ever* have been the *patrons of religious abuse*, so

have they inflexibly opposed any *general* attempt at church reform. Reforms, indeed, in their peculiar establishments, have been incessant. Such, again, as touched the discipline of the secular clergy, have some times found support in the jealousy of the regular orders. But any exertion, tending to the restoration of *pure Christianity*, *has ever found its fiercest opponents in the cloister*; and through such opposition many unscriptural practices have been perpetuated, both in the Eastern and Western churches. Of course, it is not intended to ascribe to them all the corruptions of religion; indeed, we have already traced the origin of many of these to a period preceding the creation of monachism. The 'vices of the clergy' are acknowledged in ecclesiastical records, long before the prevalence of monastic influence; and it seems probable, even, that the traffic in indulgences, finally so scandalous to the mendicants, was begun by the bishops. *But all existing abuses were carefully nourished and fostered by the hands of monks*; and the execution of miracles and other popular impostures, was conducted with peculiar ingenuity and success by the inmates of the monastery. And we may add, that the lucrative system of purgatory was then most zealously supported, as indeed the wealth which flowed from it was distributed for the most part among those establishments." *

And yet this is the "body of religious persons, who," according to the enlightened author just quoted, "formed, for the space of five or six centuries, the most respectable portion of the Christian world." Miserable world, if this was the most respectable portion of it! But were not the persecuted Waldenses a more respectable portion of the "*Christian world*" than these systematic deceivers of men, and mockers of God? Were not even those who sought reformation in the Church of Rome more "respectable" than its fierce opponents, the unprincipled fomenters of every abuse--the agents of false miracles--the vile brood who fattened on every corruption?

* Waddington's History of the Church, p. 411.

Nor were the fruits of celibacy less general or less loathsome among the secular clergy. We have observed, that a Spanish Council issued the first prohibition of marriage in the Christian Church; but as if Providence had assigned to Rome a fatal pre-eminence in every part of the apostate system, it appears that the first *general* interdict on this subject was issued by Pope Siricius in 385. This Papal decision "was enforced with rigour, and confirmed by the sanctions of Innocent, Leo, and Gregory, as well as by the Councils of Carthage, Orleans, Tours, Toledo, Aix la Chapelle, Worms, and Mentz, in Africa, France, Spain, and Germany." *

This is admitted by Roman Catholic writers to have been a *new law* in the fourth century. Compulsory celibacy was unheard of for three hundred years in the church, except as one of the abominations of paganism, or the dogmas of heresy. The Romans had their vestal virgins. Jerome informs us, that the Athenian Hierophants endeavoured to secure continency by drinking cold hemlock; the Egyptian priesthood, by a rigid abstinence from flesh and wine, and the priests of Cybele, by mutilation. The last found an imitator in the eminent Father, Tertullian. The Manicheans, from their Gnostic antipathy to every thing connected with the body, debarred their *elect* from what they considered the defilements of matrimony. Such were the examples followed by the Catholic Church!

There is not on record an instance of such gigantic iniquity as the inexorable obstinancy of the Court of Rome on this subject. In spite of the most glaring abuses, the most shocking violations of the laws of nature and of God—in spite of the most urgent remonstrances from the laity, as well as from the clergy themselves, this antichristian law was relentlessly enforced, especially by Hildebrand, who found it essential to his scheme of universal monarchy. For, as Father Paul justly remarks, the affections of a married clergy for their wives, their

* Edgar—Variations, p. 513.

children, their relatives, their country, their prince, would detach them from the Roman See, and render it impracticable for the Pope to use them as the instruments of his ambition. Hence, the satanic pertinacity with which this desolating policy was pursued in the face of the most appalling difficulties. That the general reader may have some faint idea of these difficulties, as well as of the "MORE EXCELLENT WAY" of the Oxford Divines, we venture to add a few touches more to the sketch of clerical celibacy which we have already given.

Some of the more earnest, honest, and eminent of these heroes of sanctity have left us proofs of the perils of their vocation, which we know not whether to call mournful or ludicrous. They literally made a covenant with their eyes, that they should never look upon a woman; they fled into the wilderness; they were *Stylites*, and mounted pillars; they were *Boskoi*, and fed, all fours, on grass; they clothed their bodies in sheep-skin, sackcloth, or iron; they scourged themselves with whips; rolled themselves in snow, or plunged into frozen streams, in order to get the better of the unclean devil with which they were tormented! Even the father of the Benedictines, the great reformer of the monastic system, found it necessary to "roll his naked body on nettles and thorns, till the lacerated carcass, through pain, lost all sense of pleasure!"

Such frantic struggles against one of the most powerful of nature's laws, could neither be lasting nor general. Many of the clergy had recourse to what was called *Domesticism*, and enjoyed the society of women devoted in profession, though not by vow, to virginity, who acted in the capacity of house-keepers, and not only shared the holy man's board, but also "his nightly couch"—a practice of which Cyprian, Jerome, and Chrysostom complain most bitterly. What is more shocking still, the guilty mistress confessed to her reverend accomplice, who, as Damian drily remarks, would not be likely to inflict a severe penance. Attempts were made to put down this evil. Some councils decreed that the priest should be deprived of all female

society, but a mother, a sister, or an aunt. But horrible as is the fact, even *these* were not safe from the hands that marriage would have polluted! “The Council of Mentz, therefore, in its tenth canon, as well as other contemporary and later synods, had to forbid the clergy the society of even their nearest female relations.” *

Even the ignorant and dissolute laity were so shocked with the idea of married priests, that when Gregory the Seventh, so much admired by the Puseyites, attempted to *reform* that portion of the clergy, who obeyed the law of God, and lived in holy wedlock, they refused to receive baptism or the communion from their hands. Laymen baptised their own children, spilled the consecrated wine, trampled the transubstantiated bread under foot, and even in some instances proceeded to lay violent hands on their pastors. So powerfully had they been wrought upon by the fanaticism of the Pope, to whom the clergy were at last compelled to submit after a noble resistance! The melancholy results of this victory over conscience, and divine law, and human virtue, history has too plainly told. It polluted the hierarchy from its head to its lowest members; and throughout England, France, Spain, Italy, and Germany, filled the church with the most revolting impurity, which was to a great extent, sanctioned by ecclesiastical law. The German clergy, who, with their emperor, in a body sought a release from their bonds, confessed to the Pope, that not one in fifty of their number was living in chastity. Previous to the Reformation, the Swiss compelled every one of their priests to keep a concubine for the protection of their own wives and daughters. Was it better with the nunneries? “*Aujourd’hui voiler une fille c’est la prostituer.*”† But it is time to draw a veil over this hateful picture, which we should not exhibit even thus partially, but for the boasting of the Romanists and the infatuation of the Puseyites.

* Bin. vii. 137; Labb. xi. 586.

† Paol, i. 32; Bruys, iii. 610, 611.—See Edgar c. 15, *passim*.

CHAPTER XIII.

CLAIMS OF THE ANCIENT FATHERS.

THE soil of human nature, and the atmosphere of the world, are ungenial to the growth of truth, which lives only as it is the subject of thought, and ever languishes without the sustaining grace of heaven. Error, on the other hand, is indigenous to the depraved heart, where it always finds nourishment and shelter—where it flourishes rankly, still gathering new energy, spreading on every side, and feeding on all it touches. It is identified with the honour of a name, the sanctity of a building, with civil immunities and sacred forms. It lurks in certain canonical phrases and orthodox technicalities, handed down from age to age, neither explained nor understood, but merely as mystical symbols of the faith, for which confessors strove and martyrs bled—"the faith which the Catholic Church holdeth and professeth." For this the partizans of things as they are, the enemies of all change, the blind conservators of abuse, are ready—not to go to the stake themselves, but to drag others to it. Time is not permitted to correct, nor experience to teach—but the authority of the dead binds all their blunders upon the living, from age to age. Here the sins of the "fathers" are visited on the children, not only to the third and fourth, but to the fortieth generation.

The advocates of ancient authority know well, that there is

a strong bias of the human mind in their favour. Distance lends a charm to the most rugged and uninteresting landscape. Naked rocks and dreary mountain barrenness melt on the vision into one undulating plain of liquid azure, and cold dense fogs are gilded with a glorious splendour. Somewhat similar is the illusion of antiquity. There is a mysterious power in the past to which few minds are insensible. It ennobles the mean, magnifies the little, beautifies the deformed, and covers folly itself with a robe of sanctity. When the mind awakes from the apathy of ignorance, and can evade the exigences of the present moment, it longs to tread with reverence in the footsteps, and to gaze on the monuments, of by-gone generations. To minds of a certain unhappy cast especially, neither the present nor the future presents much that is pleasing. The little pleasure they enjoy is derived from memory, which lingers on the sunny spots of life,—few and evanescent,—lighting up the landscape with brighter colours, and diffusing a fresher fragrance around the bowers where affection was wont to repose. This precious light gilds the clouds of sorrow, and relieves even the retrospect of suffering. Memory culls flowers from the sharpest pains—"the very hedges are made to bloom, and every thorn bears a blossom." To such a pensive eye there is always a hallowing influence in the past; and whatever is ancient is venerable and true. Any thing like rigid analysis dispels a happy illusion; and is as unwelcome as the discovery of animalcula in his vegetable food was to the Brahmin.

Yet, with all respect for the poetic feelings of such sentimental readers, we must ask, shall "wisdom and counsel" do nothing to counteract the degenerating tendencies of all earthly institutions—to correct the errors of inexperience—to repair the decays of age—to pour new vigour into a weak and sickly frame—and arrest its progress towards dissolution? Should an institution founded ages ago be now dead, it must either be re-animated or buried out of our sight. By a doting care, indeed, the letter of an establishment may be kept sacred; but

what is the letter without the spirit? *This*, if it be true, is too subtle to be bound—too etherial to be imprisoned in earthly forms. Time, while he is wearing out institutions, is ever renovating, raising, and expanding society, for which these institutions were designed, to which at their origin they were probably suited, and to which, in its progress, they should be from time to time adapted. What is their value, when the living soul that once animated them has sought new organs, and found more appropriate mediums for the manifestation of its restored energies? What are many establishments, but the *Gattons* and *Old Sarums* of the church?—but quays from which the wave of commerce has receded?—but fortifications maintained for show, after the treasures they defended, and the power they symbolised, have for ever departed?

From what has been said in the two last chapters, the reader will be prepared to estimate the value of patristic authority, and will find, however reluctantly, that it has been overrated. Incoherent, declamatory, and illogical, the works of the Fathers will seldom give solid satisfaction to a well-regulated mind. Extravagance, exaggeration, bombast, and confusion cloud their uncertain meaning, and make the wearied and bewildered reader feel like one wandering in the wilderness, where the light breaks forth but in gleams, and the luxuriant and unwholesome vegetation serves only to obstruct the ill-defined way. Hence, their writings have furnished an armoury for all parties; and it is certain, that the most contradictory dogmas might be defended by fair quotations from the same author. Oriental philosophy, “falsely so called,” and daring speculation, deeply tainted their divinity, and exposed them to the anticipative censure of the Apostle Paul. But what above all renders them dangerous guides in theology, is the unsound principle of interpretation, which, after Origen, they adopted in expounding the word of God—a principle by which the Scriptures might be made to speak any thing which suited the mystical fancy of the writer; and, therefore, neutralised their

authority in every thing. The blind admiration of such men in the ages of darkness, of which they were the evening stars, should have no effect on us. That their ignorant and credulous disciples should greatly magnify luminaries through which they sought a heavenly sanction for their monkish and profitable absurdities, is quite natural. Still the suffrages of such persons should be estimated, not by their number, but their value. The knowledge of the present is enriched by the hoarded treasures of past ages; and the wisdom of former times, which was then fresh from the mine, and mingled with much alloy, has been often submitted to the fire, and is now "gold purified seven times."

The missionary martyr WILLIAMS, will be regarded with reverence for ages to come. But how different is the estimate of his *intellectual* character formed by us, from that cherished by the natives of those isles which he evangelized! Had he died in the same tragical manner so early as the *third* century, not to speak of a later and more degenerate period, his recently recovered bones would have enriched hundreds of churches!—And had the LONDON MISSIONARY Society existed in the Nicene age, and been imbued with "*Catholic*" principles, such a treasure would have made it one of the best endowed societies in Europe.

We cannot too curiously explore the foundations of that POWER, whose dark and terrible energy desolated Christendom for so many centuries—that power which the Oxford Divines are now moving (not heaven and earth, but) Church and State to restore, and to which, they would again bring the nations of Europe into subjection. The people should be made acquainted with the devices of the spiritual despotism which led gradually, but necessarily, in the progress of the "mystery of iniquity," to the development of the full-grown "MAN OF SIN,"—

"A minister whom hell hath sent
To spread its blast where'er he went;
And fling, as o'er the earth he trod,
His shadow between men and God."

Every Roman Catholic priest has vowed that he will never take and interpret Scripture, "otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers."* To this principle, the Puseyites subscribe *ex animo*. The Bible is at the opposite end of the long, long "*Catena Patrum*," and its meaning must come down living along that chain, or they cannot receive it. The Bible must remain mute, till five hundred discordant voices form one harmonious utterance! And how are the laity to know where or when they are unanimous? They must just take it on trust from their teachers, who stand between the people and the fathers, as the fathers stand between the teachers and Christ. But, if the authority of the Fathers constitute an infallible rule of faith, the Christian has surely a right to examine it for himself. How else can he fashion his opinions and his life according to the standard? In order, then, to read the word of God with safety and profit, "the laity must for themselves deliberately peruse and compare the multitudinous folios of Christian antiquity—a task for which, from want of leisure, acquaintance with the Greek and Latin languages, and opportunity of access to the remains of ancient theology, the mass of mankind, it is plain, are wholly incompetent. The clause, therefore, is tantamount to a prohibition of the use of the Bible."† It took Archbishop Usher eighteen or nineteen years to get through the Fathers, though he read a portion every day, no matter what other business demanded his attention. Is there one of a thousand, even of the clergy, who have read all the Fathers? How can a lawyer tell whether the great legal authorities are for or against his cause, till he has read and compared them? Is he to take the fact for granted, from the interested advocate on the other side?

According to the Oxford Divines, the Fathers are the infallible interpreters of the Apostles—and they themselves are the

* Creed of Pius IV.

† Roman Misquotation, by the Rev. Mr. Pope, p. 133;—a highly valuable work, which ought to be circulated in a cheap form.

“*inerrant*” interpreters of the Fathers. From *their* lips the “children of the Church” are to receive the “lively oracles.” We may push the claims of our Newmans, Puseys, Keebles, and Sewells, aside without ceremony; but the Fathers must be treated with the respect due to old age. As the genius of Pascal confounded the anti-christian policy of whole hosts of accomplished Jesuits, when their principles had corrupted nearly every court and college in Europe, so Mr. Isaac Taylor’s well sustained attacks, have shaken the foundations of Anglo-Catholicism. If indeed, the matter at issue were to rest on the *unanimity* of the Fathers, we might spare ourselves the trouble of looking narrowly at the character of the judges; for it is easy to show, that where they are not unanimous *against* modern Catholics (as they *are* in regard to the supreme authority of Holy Scripture, and the duty of all the people to read it) they *differ* among themselves; and that on texts of vital moment in the controversy. On the meaning of the words addressed by our Lord to Peter, in the 16th chapter of Matthew, and on the words of the institution of the Lord’s Supper, we have Fathers against Fathers in most decided conflict. There is thus, as we shall see hereafter more fully, a *rent* in the very foundation of the Catholic system.

We will suppose, however, that every layman undertakes to square the Bible with the *Bibliotheca Patrum*—and that for this purpose, he carefully reads the twenty-eight folio volumes of the Latin, and also the immensely voluminous productions of the Asiatic and African bishops and doctors—a library in themselves;—and we will even allow him to use translations; yet how can he be sure that all these writings are genuine? And if not, may they not be corrupted in the very place which he relies on to establish the divine right of the priesthood and prelacy? There is no fact in history better established, than that the Patristic writings have been interpolated, expurgated, and mutilated to an extent utterly unaccountable, except on a principle embraced very early, and adopted by the most emi-

ment of the Fathers,—namely, that it is lawful, and even meritorious to *lie* for the sake of the truth! On this principle, avowedly, Eusebius suppressed the most shameful things in the lives of the Martyrs referred to in his history. On this nefarious principle, books were written in the names of eminent men, long dead, in order to gain credit for the sentiments of the anonymous author. Passages of genuine works were expunged; others were wilfully interpolated and altered, to meet the views of those who had departed from the faith—which the Papal advocates called “*correcting*” them! In numerous places, too, the manuscripts were corrupted through the ignorance or carelessness of transcribers. Erasmus, Pamèle, Du Pin, and many other eminent Roman Catholic writers, testify strongly, that the works of Cyprian, Ambrose, and others, have been thus tampered with by the monks.*

“The Faith of Catholics confirmed by Scripture, and attested by the Fathers of the first five centuries of the church,” occupies, says Mr. Pope, “no ordinary place in the estimation of Roman ecclesiastics; first published in 1813, it was reprinted in 1830, with considerable additions.” It was made use of by Dr. Poynter, Dr. Trevern, and by many other advocates of the Church of Rome; and is, in fact, the *Manual*, which has of late years supplied the Papal controversialists with quotations from the Fathers. It was compiled by the Rev. Messrs. Ber-rington and Kirk, from one of whom, Dr. Pusey is said to have imbibed his Catholic principles. The latter, Mr. Kirk, observes, that it is become a kind of class-book, and standard work among Catholics. As it was from it that Mr. Maguire quoted in the public discussion, circumstances led Mr. Pope to examine the quotations. For this purpose he visited *Cheatem’s* Library, Manchester, and consulted the identical editions, and probably the very copies of the Fathers from which the “Faith of Catholics was compiled;—and what must have been his as-

* See, for ample proofs on this head, *Roman Misquotation*, by Rev. R. T. P. Pope.—Curry & Co. Dublin.

tonishment to find this work made up of a series of wilful mutilations of the Fathers? Mr. Pope—a candid, upright, and honourable man,—to whom Protestants are more indebted than they have been willing to acknowledge (for he was no party man) has executed his laborious task with great ability, and produced a work as valuable as it is seasonable.

Take a specimen or two of this literary delinquency, which would blast the *moral* character of any one but a Catholic Divine. The following is a most daring mutilation of a passage from Origen, perverted with the wicked design of placing the Fathers and their traditions on a level with the word of God :—

ORIGEN.

According to the *Faith of Catholics* :—

“To me it is good to adhere to APOSTOLIC MEN as to God and his Christ, and to draw intelligence from the Scriptures according to the sense that has been delivered by *them*.”

ORIGEN.

According to the Latin Version of Ruffinus :—

“To me it is good to adhere, as to God and our Lord Jesus Christ, so also to his APOSTLES; and to draw intelligence from the Scriptures, according to the sense that has been delivered by *them*.”*

We shall dismiss the faith of Catholics with another extract brought forward to support the doctrine of purgatory :—

TERTULLIAN, according to Messrs. Berrington and Kirk :—“Oblations for the Dead, on the anniversary day.”†

TERTULLIAN, according to the original :—

“Oblations for the dead *for their birth days to heaven*, on the anniversary.”

For the import of the *suppressed word natalitia*, see the chapter on purgatory. Meantime, it is sufficient to observe, that these offerings were made, not for “suffering souls in pur-

* In the Benedictine edition (which the compilers employed) the passage stands thus :—“Mihi autem sicut Deo et Domino Jesu Christo, ita et APOSTOLIS EJUS adharere bonum est, et ex divinis Scripturis secundum ipsorum traditionem intelligentiam capere.”—Opera Tome. ii. p. 224. Hom. vii. in Levit. Bened. Paris, 1733.

† De Cor. Mil. p. 289. Faith of Catholics, p. 356. Ed. 1830.

gatory," but for the *martyrs in glory*, to celebrate their death, which was called their *birth* to life eternal. The offerings were made for the benefit of the *living poor*, in honour of the martyrs, who were considered to be in a state of supereminent glory. But the word *natalitia* was wilfully suppressed, in order to get a show of argument for purgatory, even so far up as the third century, though this would be two hundred years too late!

While on the subject of literary frauds, we must not pass over the Bourdeaux Testament, published by the Jesuits in 1686, with the "permission" of the archbishop. There are two copies of the work in Dublin, one in the Library of the University, the other in Marsh's, from which Mr. Pope copied the following passages, with many others, containing *additions* to the word of God:—

"As they offered to the Lord *the sacrifice of the Mass*, and fasted."—(Acts xiii. 2.)

"Yet so as by the fire *of purgatory*."—(1 Cor. iii. 15.)

"Some shall depart from the *Roman* faith."—(1 Tim. iv. 1.)

"There is a sin which is not *mortal*, but *venial*."*—(1 John, v. 17.)

Father Simon testifies, in his Critical History of the New Testament, that one of these Jesuits alleged, in defence of this liberty with the divine oracles, that the Calvinists were continually annoying them, by demanding Scripture for the Mass, &c.; so they were resolved to stop such troublesome mouths, by inventing a text. This desperate expedient demonstrates two things—First, that the peculiarities of Romanism cannot be defended from the unadulterated Scriptures; and, secondly, that Catholic advocates will sacrifice truth, conscience, and revelation, to the interests of the church.

Would that it could be urged on the other side, that these

* In 1 Cor. vii. 10, 2 Cor. vi. 14, and 1 Tim. iv. 3, they thrust in "*le sacrement de Mariage*."—(Rom. Misq. p. 295.)

falsifications of the New Testament, and of the early Fathers, were but the work of the Jesuits in the worst times of their history; and that their loose maxims of morality are now reprobated by their own party. They are, indeed, reprobated vehemently, when, by any mistake, a Protestant advocate is betrayed into similar practices.* But Roman Catholic Divines do not seem to have repudiated the principle, that it is lawful to *lie* for the good of the church. At all events, they have not forsaken the practice. Not long since one of their most eminent champions, a professor at Rome, and now a bishop in England, dared to defend his exposition of the 6th of John, as applied to the eucharist, by adducing the authority of a foreign commentator, as if that critic understood the expressions, "eating my flesh, and drinking my blood," literally; whereas he expressly states, that they do not refer to the Lord's Supper at all, and must be taken figuratively. When Dr. Wiseman was detected in this daring fraud, how did he act? Did he plead that it was a mistake, and acknowledge his error. By no means, he boldly accused his learned opponent of controversial artifice, declaring that they had quoted from entirely different works by the same author. Dr. Wiseman from his *Meletemata*, and Dr. Burton from his *commentary* on the Gospel of John. What was the fact? Why these were just different parts of the title-page of the self-same work! Either Dr. Wiseman had not seen his authority, and was grossly ignorant, and grossly presumptuous in his ignorance; or he had seen it, and publicly and confidently stated what he *knew* to be false. It is hard to say which horn is the more disgraceful to the foremost advocate of the true faith!

If such an imposition could be attempted in reference to the authority of a well-known divine, by one of the most learned, enlightened, and popular of Roman controversialists, in the face of the Protestant public of Britain, with so many chances

* The reader will remember the outcry against the Rev. Mr. McGhee and Dr. Todd.

of detection on every side, and all to gain the countenance of a single Protestant writer, to what length will these devices not go in the darker regions of their church,—in Spain or Italy? * To what length must they have gone in the dark ages, before the world was blest with a free press!

A pamphlet was lately addressed by an Irish priest to the author of these pages. It was an exact transcript, word for word, from Dr. Wiseman on the eucharist; but before this fact was discovered, I addressed him in the following words:—“I referred to *Kuinoel* himself, and found him contending that the “eating,” &c. could not refer to the Lord’s Supper, because the words are “*manifestly figurative* ;” because the Lord’s Supper was not then instituted, and such a reference would have made matters still more obscure. . . . I entreat you, Sir, not to refer to Protestant authors any more without consulting them *yourself*. I really feel for the painful position in which *some writer* has repeatedly placed you; and I do not wish to take the advantage I might of such great indiscretion.”

Thus, the great body of parish priests and curates, receive the “unanimous” opinions of the Fathers *implicitly*, from such truthful authorities as Dr. Wiseman and the compilers of *The Faith of Catholics*; and the laity receive them without question from their respective guides. And this is all they know about the “infallible, sovereign, living, and speaking tribunal.” What a tribunal!

“The church” has furnished no *synopsis* of the Fathers to show their unanimity—no epitome of conciliar decrees—no code of Apostolic traditions—no commentary on the Bible—no perfect text, nor infallible translation of the word of God. She has left the people wholly in the hands of the clergy, whose *garbled* quotations from *corrupted* editions of the *lying* Fathers,

* We should not wonder at the miracle-mongering of the middle ages, when we see the marvels imported in the middle of the nineteenth century by an English peer.—(See Lord Shrewsbury’s *Estatica*, &c.)

are to stand on a level by right with the "SCRIPTURES OF TRUTH;" and virtually set them aside, just as an *explanatory* act of Parliament *practically supersedes* the old statute law to which it is appended! But more than this. The church has not merely kept the witnesses under her own control, put them to the torture, and compelled them to speak her will, but she actually ascends the judgment-seat, and pronounces sentence in her *own case*, where her enormous wealth and power are at issue! The most corrupt civil judge on earth, in the darkest state of society, would not be guilty of such indecency. Is it *possible* in the nature of things, that her decisions should be IMPARTIAL between her own claims and those of the manacled and remonstrating CONSCIENCE of the laity?

But granting for a moment, that these grey-headed witnesses were allowed to tell their story in their own way, and it were wholly favourable to high church claims, (whereas it is very much the reverse,) let us see what their testimony is really worth. Are they authorities on which any sane, unbiased mind would pin its faith?

The most renowned of the Fathers flourished in the fourth century. Among these was *Gregory*, son of the Bishop of Naziensus. Within sixty years after the establishment of Christianity, he thus addresses the Governor of the city:—"The law of Christ subjects you to my power, and to my pulpit; for ours is the authority—an authority greater and more excellent than that which you possess, unless indeed spirit is to be subject unto flesh, and heaven unto earth."

This is the true Catholic spirit of church ascendancy—the spirit, too, of the Nicene age. The most holy of the Fathers appealed to the civil sword to execute their canons, and punish their adversaries. Athanasius protested against the recal of Arius from banishment.

Ambrose, who, like Plato, was fabled to have been visited, when an infant, by a swarm of bees, which reposed on his lips, and then ascended high in the air, was made bishop on the eighth

day after baptism! He was the first great champion of church ascendancy, and he compelled the Emperor, Theodosius, to perform public penance as a condition of his reconciliation to the church. This great victory of the ecclesiastical over the civil power, occurred in the year 390.

St. John Chrysostom was a great man, and a reforming bishop. But, says Waddington,* a writer disposed rather to extenuate than aggravate the faults of the Fathers—"he was not exempt from the *errors and abuses of his day*. He exalted the merit of *celibacy*; he strongly inculcated the duty of *fasting*, and the sanctity of a solitary and *ascetic life*. He encouraged the veneration for saints and martyrs; but the practical nature of his piety sometimes shone through the mists of his superstitious delusion."† He also held the corporeal presence in the eucharist. Such were the errors of his day.

The great *St. Jerome* had an excessive admiration for the "monastic excellence." He was a monk himself, and from his convent at Bethlehem, he expatiated on the justifying merits of mortification, celibacy, and pilgrimages; and "though in the birth-place of Christ, at the very fountain of humility and peace, he vented even against his Christian adversaries a malignant and caluminous rancour." Jerome delivered a prophecy concerning the millennium, which was believed for six hundred years. He also gave it as his opinion, that the difference between Peter and Paul was only *feigned for pious purposes*—for which opinion he was strongly reprehended by Augustine.

Erasmus says, that *Augustine*, Bishop of Hippo, allowed to be the most eminent of the Fathers, began to read Paul's epistles with no instructor when near thirty years of age—that he was immediately hurried to the episcopal office, and compelled to teach others what he had not learned himself; and that he

* History of the Church, p. 140; Ibid. p. 141.

† In one visitation through the Asiatic provinces he deposed thirteen bishops, and passed a severe censure on the whole order.

had not sufficient knowledge of Greek to enable him to study the commentaries of the Greek writers. He gave the authority of his name to the maxim, that it is right to punish religious errors by civil penalties, and thus sanctioned the diabolical principle of persecution, which has so disgraced and desolated the Christian Church in every age; and which lurks, like a cowardly demon, in certain corners of it still. His motives for embracing the Catholic faith, would not weigh much with a modern sceptic, though they might influence a congregation of ignorant peasants.

According to Mosheim, and other learned authors, the value of the writings that remain of the *Apostolic Fathers*, is very little, except as historical witnesses of what prevailed in their day; and even in regard to this, as Mr. Taylor has justly remarked, the testimony of heathen writers, such as Pliny and Tacitus, would be quite as good. They display neither learning nor eloquence; and their style is most illiterate. Besides, their works have been so grossly corrupted as to make it exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to separate the genuine from the spurious additions of imposters. What then is the value of their supposed traditions, as a Rule of Faith? *

Of the merits of the *primitive Fathers*, as moralists, Mosheim delivers the following judgment, which is fully borne out by their writings:—"Before the question mentioned above, concerning the merit of the ancient Fathers, as moralists, be decided, a previous question must be determined, viz., what is meant by a bad director in point of morals? And if by such a person, he meant one who has no determinate notion of the nature and limits of the duties incumbent on Christians—no clear and distinct ideas of virtue and vice; who has not penetrated the spirit and genius of those sacred books, to which alone we must appeal in every dispute about Christian virtue, and who, in consequence thereof, fluctuates often in uncertainty, or falls into error in explaining the divine laws, though

* Mosheim, History, cent. 1, chap. ii. sec. 22.

he may frequently administer sublime and pathetic instructions ; if, by a bad guide in morals, such a person as we have now delineated be meant, then it must be confessed, that this title belongs, indisputably, to many of the Fathers.” *

Could this be truly said of the very lowest order of Protestant writers of the present day, or of any day since the Reformation ? How could the professor of “ Christian morals ” in the University of Oxford, have the conscience to send the people away from the Bible, and our own excellent practical writers, to learn what is right and wrong from the “ wisemen ” that lived fifteen hundred years ago ? Does not such advice betray great ignorance of the Gospel, or great ignorance of the Fathers—or great treachery to the church in which he holds so important an office ?

“ It was while avowing himself a Christian,” says the truly learned and philosophic author of *The Corruptions of Christianity*, “ that Clement of Alexandria maintained the existence of preceding worlds, formed from the substance of the present ; that he described the planets as *animated bodies* ; that he proclaimed the eternity of matter, and his belief in the transmigration of souls. His account of the birth of Eve was not only different from what is given in Scripture, but such as not to bear repeating. He spoke of the angels as having been ensnared to impurity by the beauty of women ; and with other strange doctrines held an unintelligible dogma, which distinguished between a Word that became incarnate, and a superior Word which has remained invisible, and which is alone the Word of God.” †

“ The doctrine of baptismal regeneration was inculcated,” says Dr. Vaughan, “ by nearly all the primitive Fathers—not only by such writers as Clemens Alexandrinus, and Origen, but in the less speculative productions of Justin Martyr, Ter-

* Eccl. Hist. cent. 2, c. iii. sec. 10.

† Tillemont, *Memoirs*, iii. pp. 185, 196, 650, 654.—Du Pin, i 62—66.—See Vaughan’s *Corruptions of Christianity*, p. 254.

tullian, and Cyprian." According to Tertullian, the water in this ceremony is sanctified by the Holy Spirit, who never fails to descend upon it as the name of God is invoked by the officiating minister. "The doctrine of the sacraments was so constructed, that religion could neither begin, nor be sustained, nor end, successfully without them. They were the Alpha and Omega; and the priest, as being alone competent to their administration, was to the worshipper in the place of the Almighty, having the destiny of the victim at his pleasure."*

Let the candid reader reflect on the following passage, from one of the latest and best of our ecclesiastical historians, and seriously ask himself, whether the Fathers, even if their works were available to the multitude, can be regarded as safe guides in religion—and whether it is not an impudent pretension to claim for such men, an infallible authority!

"The original source of this evil (literary *fraud*) was at least free from any stain or shame. It had long been a practice among ancient philosophical writers, to ascribe their works to some name of undisputed authority, in order to secure attention to their opinions; though the opinions were well known to be only those of the writer; but the consequences which flowed from it have infected the Church of Christ with some of its deepest and most dangerous pollutions. Books written in later ages were zealously circulated as the writings of the Apostles and Apostolic Fathers.† The works of these last were altered or interpolated, according to the notions of after times, or the caprices of the interpolator; but usually for the purpose of proving the antiquity of some new opinion—some innovation in discipline—some usurpation in authority. The practice was justified by the detestable, but POPULAR PRINCIPLE, '*that truth may be defended by falsehood*;'—it was encouraged by the difficulties of detection in ignorant ages; and it continued for

* Corruptions of Christianity, chap. vii.

† Such were the Apostolical canons, and the Apostolical constitutions in the second century; and also the False Decretals in the eighth.

more than six centuries to disgrace the Roman Church. It was the same principle, *pushed a little farther*, which has stained the writings of so many of the early Fathers with statements, at least doubtful, if not with palpable falsehood. But on the other hand, we should ever recollect, that Christianity in those days was chiefly in the hands of Greeks and Africans,* men of subtle intellects and violent passions,—whose habits and whose climate too often carried them into the extreme, either of metaphysical sophistry or wild enthusiasm—men who could speculate on their faith, or who could die for it; but who were little calculated for the tranquil equanimity of sober and reasonable belief. We should recollect also, that some of our best and commonest principles of action were then unknown or partially received; and that, in fact, many of them are the result of the patient operation of Christianity on the human character, through a long succession of ages. We shall never do justice to the history of our religion, unless we continually bear in mind the low condition of purity and morals, existing among the people to whom it was first delivered.”†

I shall conclude this chapter with a few extracts from a remarkable article in the *Edinburgh Review*,‡ on the *Religious and Literary merits of the Fathers*. It is ascribed by Lord Byron to Thomas Moore, Esq. the poet;§ and it certainly

* It is certainly very remarkable, that for the first *three centuries*, Rome produced no ecclesiastical writer of any merit, excepting Clement; and the Western Provinces not one of any description. Rome was very nearly as barren during the three which followed. Waddington's Hist. p. 39.

† Ibid. The story of the *Phanix* will show to the most illiterate the credit due to the best of the Fathers, as expositors of Christian doctrine. Clement devoutly believed that this bird appeared once in 500 years—that it died in Arabia—that another Phoenix rose from its ashes and deposited the bones of its predecessor on the altar of the Sun at Heliopolis, in Egypt. This fable was used as a powerful argument for the *Resurrection*, not only by Clement, but also by Tertullian, Eusebius, Lactantius, Ambrose, Jerome, and Cyril!

‡ Vol. xxiv. p. 58, November, 1814.

§ Moore's Life of Byron, vol. i. letter 219.

bears indubitable marks of the fascinating style of that brilliant writer :—

“ The error of these primitive doctors of the church,—their Christian heathenism and heathen Christianity, which led them to look for the Trinity among those shadowy forms that peopled the twilight groves of the Academy ; and who arrayed the meek, self-humbling Christian in the proud and iron armour of the Portico ;—their bigotted rejection of the most obvious truths in natural science,—the bewildering vibration of their moral doctrines, never resting between the extremes of laxity and rigour,—their credulity,—their inconsistencies of conduct and opinion,—and, worst of all, their forgeries and falsehoods, have already been so often and so ably exposed by divines of all countries, religions and sects—the Du Pins, Mosheims, Middletons, Clarkes, Jortons, &c. that it seems superfluous to add another line upon the subject ; though we are not quite sure, that in the present state of Europe, a discussion of the merits of the Fathers is not as seasonable, and even fashionable a topic as we could select. At a time when the Inquisition is re-established by our “ beloved Ferdinand ;” —when the Pope again brandishes the keys of St. Peter with an air worthy of a successor of the Hildebrands and Perettis ;—when canonization is about to be inflicted on another Louis,—and little silver medals of embryo princes are gravely vowed at the shrine of the Virgin ; in times like these, it is not too much to expect, that such enlightened authors as St. Jerome and Tertullian, may become the classics of most of the continental courts.”

Little did the writer imagine when he penned this, that in twenty years, Jerome, Tertullian, and Co. would become the classics of Oxford University, the head quarters of Tory Protestantism ; and that the fanatical disciples of these same Fathers would proselyte half the hierarchy, and agitate to fill every chair in that most orthodox institution, with the zealous revivers of the monkish delusions, on which even Rome was

obliged to impose restraints. Surely, a discussion of the merits of the Fathers is now more than ever requisite, when they are set up in high places as the infallible guides of the nineteenth century,—when Lord Shrewsbury would establish among us the Toryism of the Roman Court,—with the frauds and superstitions of Italian friars. Let us however proceed with our extracts from Mr. Moore's article, which is a picture to the life, sketched by a masterly pencil:—

“St. Justin the Martyr, is usually considered as the well-spring of most of those strange errors, which flowed so abundantly through the early ages of the church, and spread around them in their course, such luxuriance of absurdity. The most amiable, and therefore the least contagious of his heterodoxies, was that which led him to patronise the souls of Socrates and other pagans, in consideration of those glimmerings of the Divine Logos, which his fancy discovered through the dark night of heathenism. The absurd part of this opinion remained, while its tolerant spirit evaporated: and while these pagans were still allowed to have known something of the Trinity, they were yet damned for not knowing more, with most unrelenting orthodoxy.

“The belief of an intercourse between angels and women, founded upon a false version of a text in Genesis,* and of an abundant progeny of demons in consequence, is one of those monstrous notions of St. Justin and other Fathers, which showed how little they had yet purged off the grossness of heathen mythology; and in how many respects their heaven was but Olympus with other names. Yet we can hardly be angry with them for this one error, when we recollect, that possibly to their enamoured angels, we owe the beautiful worlds of sylphs and gnomes; and that, perhaps at this moment, we might have wanted Pope's most exquisite poem, if the Septuagint version had translated the book of Genesis correctly.

“This doctrine, as far as it concerned angelic natures, was

* Gen. vi. 2.

at length indignantly disavowed by St. Chrysostom. But demons were much too useful a race to be so easily surrendered to reasoning and ridicule;—there was no getting up a decent miracle without them; exorcists would be out of employ, and saints at a loss for temptation:—accordingly, the writings of these holy doctors abound with such stories of demoniacal possession, as to make us alternately smile at their weakness, and blush for their dishonesty. Nor are they chargeable only with the impostures of their own times; the sanction they gave to this petty diabolism, has made them responsible for whole centuries of juggling. Indeed, whoever is anxious to contemplate a picture of human folly and human knavery, at the same time, ludicrous and melancholy, may find it in a history of the exploits of demons, from the days of the Fathers down to modern times;—from about the date of that theatrical little devil of Tertullian, (so triumphantly referred to by Jeremy Collier) who claimed a right to take possession of a woman in the theatre, ‘because he there found her on his own ground,’ to the gallant demons commemorated by Bodin and Remigius; and such tragical farces as the possession of the nuns of Loudun. The same features of craft and dupery are discoverable through the whole from beginning to end; and when we have read of that miraculous person, Gregory Thaumaturgus, writing a familiar epistle to Satan, and then turn to the story of the young Nun, in Bodin, in whose box was found a love-letter—‘a son cher dæmon;’* we need not ask more perfect specimens of the two wretched extremes of imposture and credulity, than these two very different letter writers afford.

“The belief of a Millennium, or temporal reign of Christ, during which the faithful were to be indulged in all sorts of sensual

* He quotes the story from Wier, a great patron of the demons of that time, who, we are told, invented a “*Monarchie Diabolique avec les noms et les surnoms de cinq cent-soixante douze Princes des Demons, et de sept millions quatre cent-cinq mille neuf cent-vingt-six diables, sauf erreur de calcul.*” —Jessier *Eloges des Hommes Sacans.*

gratifications, may be reckoned among those gross errors, for which neither the porch nor the academy is accountable; but which grew up in the rank soil of oriental fanaticism, and were nursed into doctrines of Christianity by the Fathers. Though the world's best religion comes from the East, its very worst superstitions have sprung there also;—as in the same quarter of the heavens arises the sunbeam that gives life to the flower, and the withering gale that blasts it. There is scarcely one of these fantastic opinions of the Fathers that may not be traced among the fables of the ancient Persians and Arabians. The voluptuous Jerusalem of St. Justin and Irenæus, may be found in those glorious gardens of Iram, which were afterwards converted into the Paradise of the Faithful by Mahomet; and their enamoured 'sons of God' may be paralleled in the angels Harut and Marut of eastern story,—who, bewildered by the influence of wine and beauty, forfeited their high celestial rank, and were degraded into teachers of magic upon earth.

“The mischievous absurdity of some of the moral doctrines of the Fathers,—the state of apathy to which they would reduce their gnostic or perfect Christian,—their condemnation of marriage, and their monkish fancies about celibacy,—the extreme to which they carried their notions of patience, even to the prohibition of all resistance to aggression, though the aggressor aimed at life itself:—the strange doctrine of St. Augustine, that the saints were the only lawful proprietors of the things of this world; and that the wicked have no right whatever to their possessions, however human laws may decree to the contrary;—the indecencies in which too many of them have indulged in their writings;—the profane frivolity of Tertullian, in making God himself prescribe the length and measure of women's veils, in a special revelation to some ecstatic spinster; and the moral indignation with which Clemens Alexandrinus inveighs against white bread, periwigs, coloured stuffs, and lap dogs;—all these, and many more such puerile and pernicious absurdities, open a wide field of weedy fancies, for ridicule to skim, and good sense

to trample upon:—but we must content ourselves with referring to the works that have been written upon the subject, particularly to the treatise ‘de la Morale des Peres’ of Barbeyrac; which, though as dull and tiresome as could reasonably be expected from the joint efforts of the Fathers and a law professor of Croningen, abundantly proves that the moral tenets of these holy men are for the most part unnatural, fanatical, and dangerous; founded upon false interpretations of Holy Writ, and the most gross and anile ignorance of human nature; and that a community of Christians formed upon their plan, is the very Utopia of monkery, idleness, and fanaticism.

“ Luckily, the impracticability of these wretched doctrines was in general a sufficient antidote to their mischief: but there were two maxims, adopted and enforced by many of the Fathers, which deserve to be branded with particular reprobation, not only because they acted upon them continually themselves, to the disgrace of the holy cause in which they were engaged, but because they have transmitted their contamination to posterity, and left the features of Christianity to this day disfigured by their taint. The first of these maxims—we give it in the words of Mosheim *—was, ‘that it is an act of virtue to deceive and lie, when by such means the interests of the church may be promoted.’ To this profligate principle, the world owes not only the fables and forgeries of these primitive times, but many of those evasions, those compromises, between conscience and expediency, which are still thought necessary and justifiable for the support of religious establishments. So industrious were the churchmen of the early ages in the inculcation of this monstrous doctrine, that we find Bishop Heliodorus insinuating it as a general principle of conduct, through the seductive medium of his romance, Theagenes and Chariclea.† The second maxim, ‘equally horrible,’ says Mosheim, ‘though in a different point

* Eccles. Hist. cent. iv.. part 2. chap. 3.

† Καλον γαρ ποτε και το ψεύδος, όταν ωφελουν τους λεγοντας, μηδεν καταβλαπτη τους ακουοντας.—*Ethiopic, Lib. 1.*

of view, was that errors in religion, when maintained and adhered to after proper admonition, are punishable with civil penalties and corporeal tortures.' St. Augustine has the credit of originating this detestable doctrine;—to him, it seems, we are indebted for first conjuring up that penal spirit, which has now, for so many hundred years walked the earth; and whose votaries, from the highest to the meanest,—from St. Augustine down to Dr. Duigenan,—from the persecutors of the African Donatists, to the calumniators and oppressors of the Irish Catholics,—are all equally disgraceful to that mild religion, in whose name they have dared to torment and subjugate mankind."

CHAPTER XIV.

SKETCH OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

SECTION I.—SPIRITUALITY OF THE CHURCH.

THE Church has had her infancy like other institutions, and has acquired knowledge and strength as she advanced towards maturity. And as children, in order to be instructed, must be taught in language suited to their capacity; and where practicable, by images addressed to the senses, that they may be gradually led on from individual objects to general principles—from the obvious to the abstruse—from what is particular and palpable, to what is general and spiritual, according as their minds are able to bear it;—so has it been with the virgin daughter of Zion. The patriarchal economy was her nurse—the law of Moses her schoolmaster;—but the Redeemer is her husband. At first, the Angel of the covenant appeared to her in a human form,—spake to her face to face, as a man speaks to his friend, giving her line upon line and precept upon precept. He mingled visibly in the social circle—mysteriously partook of human fare—condescended to wrestle with a man—encouraged by familiarity—cheered by promises—taught with an audible voice—and ascended to heaven amid the incense of an humble sacrifice.

But the church gradually advanced towards a more spiritual worship. When Moses was raised up to lead the Israelites from bondage, after their minds, degraded by slavery and polluted by idolatry, were roused by the most stupendous mira-

cles and the most terrible judgments, Jehovah assumed a pillar of fire, as the emblem of his presence, and the expression of his glory. Of all visible things light is the most spiritual, and, therefore, best fitted to represent the "Father of spirits." The church no longer saw her God in human form; but her eyes were towards the *Shekinah*, and she *believed* in his unseen presence in that emblem. As that moved, she advanced through the desert; and where it stopped, she pitched her tent. It illumined her by night, protected her by day, and guided her pathless course. "He found her in a desert, and in the waste and howling wilderness; he led her about; he instructed her; he kept her as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the Lord alone did lead her, and there was no strange god with her."

The erection of the *Tabernacle* tended still more to enlarge the ideas of the church, and to strengthen her faith. It was a dwelling place for God. It inculcated the unity of Jehovah, and served to *generalise* the views of the people, who had been prone to regard him merely as a tutelary power—the god of a hill or a valley—a household divinity, or the special guardian of a single family, whose patriarchal head worshipped by sacrifice at the domestic altar. To this tendency of our nature, which, when left to work out its own results, generated all the abominations of polytheism, God was pleased in a measure to condescend, in order that he might effectually redeem the religious principle from depravation and guilt. Now, however, they were taught to regard him as the God of all their numerous families, uniting in his solemn worship, and as loving *the gates of Zion better than all the dwellings of Jacob*; or rather to regard themselves, in all their tribes, as one family, and to look to Jehovah as in very deed, dwelling on the earth as their Father, reigning on the mercy seat, where his children, in all their generations, should find a place of refuge.

For, hitherto, the glory was visible on the Tabernacle, and the people walked by sight, though every stage in their progress tended to brighten still more, and expand the sphere of their faith. But, at the dedication of the *Temple*, the glorious symbol of the divine presence retired into the most holy place, and rested on the mercy-seat, where it was by a thick veil concealed from the eyes of all but the High Priest, who was admitted to the awful presence once every year, but not without the blood of atonement. The worshippers no longer saw human form or fiery pillar, yet they *believed* that the Lord was in his temple, and that there he had recorded his name to bless. Thither, therefore, they turned their eyes in the hour of calamity or danger; thither, when every man felt the plague of his own heart, he directed his supplications, that he might obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. By faith they now began "to see Him that is invisible," to realise his presence in their distant homes, and feel the light of his countenance beaming on their hearts from between the cherubim of glory.

But, through the influence of wicked kings, and their ready instruments, false prophets, they, in process of time, forsook their Creator, and lightly esteemed the Rock of their salvation. For this, they were carried away captive into Babylon; and the house of their God, which idolatry had polluted, was destroyed. Bowed down with affliction and iron, the faithless church at length repented. When those that had enslaved her required that she should tune her harp to the songs of Zion, the thought awakened long dormant feelings, and her paralysed hand fell aimless among the chords. *By the waters of Babylon she sat down and wept.* At length her compassionate God relented and redeemed her. The Temple was rebuilt; but the miraculous memorials of Him who had guided her through the desert—the ark of the covenant, the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod, the tables of the law, and even the Shekinah—were wanting. It required a calamity sudden and terrible, an

absence long and afflictive, not only to tear her away from her idols, but to wean her corrupt affections from the sacred objects of sense, on which she was inclined to repose. *Spirituality* was thus grafted on her faith by the hand of affliction, and the fruit was a worship more worthy of Him, who is immortal and invisible. She was taught, by this long and painful lesson, to expect that the glory of the latter Temple—inferior as it was in splendour of decoration, and deficient in monuments of divine power—would be greater than that of Solomon, because her prophets had announced that a greater than Solomon was destined to tread its courts.

This rapid sketch of the Jewish Church, has conducted us to the last stage preparatory to the dispensation of the SPIRIT. This is the incarnation of the Deity in the man Christ Jesus. His body was a temple in which he tabernacled among us. *Destroy this body*, said he, *and in three days I will raise it up*. His human nature was the antitype of the old temple, and the model of the new.* He stood between two dispensations. In his cross the one terminated, and the other commenced, like the morning star vanishing in the light of the rising sun. His personal ministry, and that of his forerunner, became the gradual transition from the carnal to the spiritual—from the visible to the unseen—from the dark to the splendid—from the earthly to the heavenly. The eyes of the church were now turned from *all holy places, and human priests, and carnal rites, and earthly altars*, to the consummation of all—CHRIST suspended on the cross, and ascending to heaven! “And I,” said He, “if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto ME.” Then, the priest and the sacrifice, he offered himself without spot to God, that he might make an end of sin, and bring in everlasting righteousness. He ascended to heaven, that he might raise a fabric which should constitute both the temple and the worshippers—a habitation of God through the Spirit—fixed to no place or age—dependent on no official succes-

* See a beautiful work, *The Three Temples*, by the Rev. Dr. Hinds.

sion, or order of priesthood—no civil authority, no holy city or pontifical throne—only *seeming*, like the rainbow, to rest upon the earth, on which it reflects the varied light of its comingling promises, and gilds its gloomy clouds with the tints of immortality !

“ Our fathers worshipped in this mountain,” said the woman of Samaria, “ and ye say in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. JESUS saith unto her, Woman, believe me the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, worship the Father. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.” * The word *truth* is used in Scripture not merely as the opposite of error, or falsehood, or hypocrisy, but also as the opposite of what is shadowy and symbolical ; and, in this connexion, it indicates what is real and substantial. To worship, then, in spirit and in truth, is not merely to worship with the heart and understanding, it is to worship without the intervention of symbols or carnal ordinances. When it is said, “ The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by JESUS CHRIST,” the *law*, as an economy, is, in its threats and its types, placed in opposition to the Gospel. The unrelenting severity and complex ceremonial of the one, stand out in contrast with the grace and truth of the other.

Hence, the conclusion is irresistible, that salvation does not depend on SACRAMENTS—that he who “ believes with the heart unto righteousness † is born of God,” and an heir of glory ; and would be so, though he never saw a bishop or a church, and never received a sacrament in his life. The ordinances of the Gospel are few and simple ; and, when *not trusted in*, highly useful and edifying. But, we should never forget, that the most important of them are only *means* of grace, and not grace itself. Now, whatever is to us a means of grace, produces thought, and feeling, and action—thought

* John iv. 20, 21.

† Romans x. 10.

that stirs the heart, and feeling that moves the conduct. What do we gain by passing through the forms of devotion, without having the soul animated by its genuine spirit?

Thus, we perceive, that the true and acceptable worship of our merciful Lord is not confined to any city or nation, or sect or church; nor does it consist in the use of any peculiar rites. There is now no legal priesthood confined to a particular order—no book, like *Leviticus*, to regulate their ministrations—no plan of church government prescribed as essential to salvation—no liturgy stamped with divine authority—not one of our creeds appointed as the standard of truth! The Bible, and the Bible alone, is in theory, and ought to be in practice, the creed of Protestants.

In fine, a religion which is spiritual, whose influence is impalpable, whose power is unseen, cannot depend for its existence or its force, on any visible rite or human institute. It blows, like the wind, where it listeth, unchained by human laws, unrestrained by earthly barriers. An all-pervading spirit, uncontrollable, untraceable, like the mysterious essence of life, it comes into the heart without observation, and working *there*, like leaven *hid*, it is known only by its effects—by the feelings it inspires, the change it works, by the motion and activity it prompts and regulates.

What mortal power—what church shall dare to seize, control, dispense this *life* at its will? Can there be a more blasphemous attempt to invade the prerogatives of God? As well might an ecclesiastical corporation calling itself *the church*, attempt to put the sun into a dark lantern, or to bottle up the dews of heaven, to be doled out to the world for money, in the shape of indulgences! When, therefore, you meet an individual who has evidently been transformed by the power of this new life, do not stop to ask whether he was baptised with water from an episcopal font, or at what altar he adores. Let it suffice that he was baptised by the Spirit, and worships at the throne of grace. Take knowledge of him that he has been

with Christ—that whereas he was blind, now he sees. Hail him as a brother beloved, a child of God, an heir of glory. He may not worship according to your forms, but still he worships the Father “*in spirit*.” He may not have sought salvation through what some regard as the exclusive “sources of grace,” but his test of discipleship is not in parish registers; he loves his Redeemer, and his people, in “*sincerity* and in *truth*; and this is the grand, indubitable criterion, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another.” The church that thus discerns the Saviour’s image, under every variety of garb, and opens her fellowship to *all* “the children of God who are scattered abroad,” while she discards the sanctity that is merely factitious and external—wrought, not by the Spirit, but the priest—not through the living word, but a mechanical sacrament—not in the “hidden man of the heart,” but “outward in the flesh;”—such a church alone, however few its members, has a right to be called *Catholic*.

SECTION II.—UNITY OF THE CHURCH.

It was a capital stroke of satanic policy to turn off the attention of the primitive church from the life of godliness to its forms—from the kingdom of God itself to its faint theoretic outline. It was as if Balaam had presented Israel in the desert with a map of Canaan, and then provoked the tribes to fight about the boundaries of the promised inheritances, until their carcases all fell in the wilderness! What is the most accurate delineation of religion that ever was drawn by the theologian’s pencil, but a map, which, however correctly its lines may be transferred to the memory, is altogether distinct from the *possession* of the estate which it so imperfectly shadows forth? A man may be the owner of a domain, and fully enjoy its benefits, without being able to describe with precision its boundaries, or to range its productions in order, according to their relative value; or to descant scientifically on their respective proper-

ties. All these things may sometimes be done far better by a professional man, who has neither part nor lot in the matter.

“The kingdom of God consists not in meats or drinks, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”* Why have not *these things* been looked for and insisted on as tests of Christian character—as qualifications for communion, essential to the unity of the church? Does the church consist in something different from the kingdom of God? The Apostolic Church certainly does not. Faith is of the utmost importance in the Christian system. By faith the primitive martyrs “subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Theirs was a working faith. It was easily known by its fruits. The church has been for sixteen hundred years striving to answer James’s challenge—to show her faith “without works.” Destitute to an awful extent of the “*mind* that was in Christ, of whom she would not learn to be “meek and lowly in heart”—averse to the labour of *love*, which the Gospel enjoins—she displayed her zeal in decreeing rites and ceremonies, deciding controversies, defining opinions, framing, repairing, and enlarging creeds, multiplying canons, laying traps for the conscientious, and torturing to the death the faithful, whom she, in the plenitude of her apostate power, was pleased to call “heretics.”

Of what avail is our Protestantism, or our Bible-reading, if it does not teach us common sense in this matter? Is it not time that the churches of the Reformation should abandon the pursuit of a shadow, and hold fast the substance, where it has not been, lost in the vain struggle for what the Apostles insisted on so little?

If any man have the *spirit* of Christ, he is sure to have the *faith* of Christ. “Men do not gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles.” This, then, is the true *diagnosis*, the real test of discipleship. “*If any man have not the spirit of*

* Romans xiv. 17.

Christ, he is none of his." It is truly astonishing, that men should have laid so much stress on orthodoxy, and none at all on godliness; and that a temper, the most opposite to the Christian, should have been evinced in contending for the cause of Christ!

Or, granting that error has been detected and exposed in its fruitive attempts to ascend the altar and poison the cup of salvation, it may ere this have won its advocates in the community; and while the orthodox and heterodox conform alike to every thing external in the system, the spirit of bitter unrelenting faction may rage within, and rend the bonds of charity and peace in sunder! Has it not been ever so in the Church of Rome? Is it not so at this moment in the Church of England, and also in the Church of Scotland? Setting aside the Puseyites, who, however, confidently appeal to the laws of their own church for a sanction to their Romanizing dogmas, have we not two hostile creeds, the Calvinistic and Arminian, mutually branded as heresy, and equally seeking shelter under the established Liturgy? May not the same thing be said of the Scottish Kirk, where the Moderates and Evangelicals have both signed the sharply-defined and decisive dogmas of the Confession of Faith? Where then is their UNITY; and what is the value of "absolute subscription?"

It is a trite remark—indeed a truism, that the minds of men are differently constituted, and their opinions modified, not merely by peculiar mental conformation, but by the influence of prejudice, education, temperament, health, and a thousand associations and circumstances which give a certain colouring to the truth, peculiar to every individual mind, though by all it may be substantially received and firmly believed. In fact, wherever there is liberty of conscience there must be difference of opinion. "All colours," says Lord Bacon, "will agree in the dark;" and so all minds will accord in a state of total ignorance. Those who glory in their church, because she attempts to compel unity of opinion, glory in their shame. If they have

peace, it is because they have made a solitude. It is the peace of the grave, the awful stillness of spiritual death! As you cannot have light without variety of colour, so you cannot have *thought* without difference of opinion. The rainbow, the creature of light, presents the loveliest picture of unity; and yet its varying colours constitute its peculiar charm. Suppose it were possible to decompose that crescent of hope, and abstract from it colour after colour, till it was reduced to a uniform whiteness, would not the bow itself vanish in the process, leaving the operator to gaze on the cloud on whose dark bosom it rested? Thus vanishes the spirit of the Gospel under the rude analysis of the hard-minded stickler for conformity!

“ In following life through bodies we dissect,
We lose it in the moment we detect.”

As in the human family, each individual, notwithstanding the general resemblance, has something in form or feature peculiar to himself; and, as this infinite diversity marks all the works of creation, shall we expect to find it wanting, or attempt to destroy it in the most delicate, complex and mysterious of all the productions of Deity?—Preposterous thought!

What we may call, by way of emphasis, the *saving* truths of religion, are all closely connected, like the links of a golden chain suspended from the *Cross*, and reaching down into the “horrible pit,” where the sinner lies struggling in the mire of conscious sin. The several links of this chain are apprehended in their proper practical connexion, while the Holy Spirit works the regenerating change upon the soul. The blessed Agent of salvation convinces “of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come.” Then all fancied human merit is torn up by the roots, and “cast like a worthless weed away.” Every earthly prop and arm of flesh is struck down; and the weeping penitent falls prostrate at the foot of the cross, and clinging there, he cries—“other refuge have I none.” When once the searching, thrilling light of the law, pierces the innermost re-

cesses of the heart, and lays bare every subtle, sinister, and selfish motive, then do we painfully feel, that "by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified;"—and that salvation is by grace through faith in a vicarious atonement. The law is a schoolmaster to lead us to CHRIST; and every hour's exercise under its stern discipline, renders increasingly evident the fact, that *we "must be born again."* "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." The change which he works on the heart is a new creation, in which the faculties of the soul are freed from the dominion of sin, and brought into subjection to the Divine will.

But sin, though subdued, is not wholly extirpated from the regenerate soul: it still exists, though not to reign, yet to defile, to perplex, and to grieve, subject to the hourly excitement of a polluting world, whose infected atmosphere we are doomed to breathe, and whose perils we are bound by our Christian profession incessantly to encounter. How often do the pilgrims of Zion exclaim in secret—Oh, for the wings of a dove to flee away and be at rest from the ten thousand corrupting influences that beset us in this probationary scene!—from the craving appetite, the importunate temptation, the alluring device, the alarming assault, the fretful tempers, corroding cares, agitating passions, the manifold agencies of evil by which conscience is defiled, peace troubled, and the sunshine of assurance overclouded! It is when we thus "groan," burdened and oppressed in the earthly and tottering tabernacle in which we dwell, as in a house infected with leprosy, that we appreciate the blessing of the hope that maketh not ashamed, and feel the ineffable consolation of being able to say with the Apostle, "*we know* that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be destroyed, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens."

In some such manner as this, the great doctrines of the Gospel are brought out, as all doctrines should be, in their practi-

cal bearing, enlightening, convincing, renewing and comforting the soul. Now, what are the truths which the pious parent most anxiously inculcates on the minds of his children—which the missionary unweariedly reiterates to the heathen—which *every* faithful minister would earnestly press on the conscience of the *dying*? When the Judge is standing at the door—when the soul's eternal destiny is trembling in the balance—when the flickering lamp of life threatens every moment to expire—in that awful hour of alternate hope and fear, would it not be cruelly impertinent—inexpressibly barbarous, to tantalize the departing soul with the *vexed questions* of polemical divinity, or the petty subtleties of a thorny disputation on theology? If you could bring the dying man to feel deeply his guilt, and led by the Spirit in this hour of extremity to cherish a firm confidence in the Saviour, and to derive thence peace and consolation, would you not rejoice in the assurance that he was safe?

And, when the last struggle of life was over—when the remains of your friend lay cold and motionless before you, and you already marked the touch of “decay's effacing fingers,” could you not, in imagination, follow the immortal spirit in its flight to glory, and fancy that you heard bursting from the lyres of heaven a more enrapturing strain, as this white-robed saint entered the blissful circle! Would Paul there regard him with averted countenance, because he might not have been able, on earth, to expound the decrees of God?

Why then should we divide the church for non-essentials? That all Christians are agreed in things necessary to salvation, is supposed in the fact that they *are* Christians. They are one in principle and one in spirit. For, in matters of religion, where charity reigns, whatever bigots may urge to the contrary, there may be difference without opposition—variety without discord—shades of opinion without diversity of feeling. “It is not,” says Jeremy Taylor, “the differing opinions that are the cause of the present ruptures, but want of charity; it is not variety of understanding, but the disunion of *wills and*

affections ; it is not the several principles, but the several *ends* that cause our miseries ; our opinions commence and are upheld according as our turns are served, and our interests are preserved, and there is no cure for us but piety and charity."

But, however we may differ in order and discipline, are we not one as the members in the body—as the branches in the vine—as the stones in the temple ? Are we not fellow-travellers through a dangerous wilderness, where we have enemies enough without biting and devouring one another ?—Yes :—though separated into companies, we all unfurl the banner of the cross ;—though advancing at unequal distances, we are all running in a course where there need be no striving for the mastery. It is not as in those races where they run all, but only one receives the prize. In the Christian course, *all* who persevere to the end are crowned. Christian churches may be compared to a fleet scattered far and wide on the tempestuous ocean of life. They sail in different groups ; their vessels vary in size, in gilding, and trimming ; and often in the mist and darkness, they may mistake a kindred flag for the colours of an enemy ; or even after a parley, if their own dialect be not spoken on board the sister vessel, there may be censure, recrimination, and insult, and even an occasional broadside. All this results from ignorance, uncharitableness, and mistaken zeal. Still they steer by the same compass, and are all coming ultimately to one point ; for whatever winds, or currents, or rocks, or false lights may do to render their courses devious, or toilsome, or perilous, their hearts still tremblingly true, own the sweet attraction of the polar star of their existence—the love of their common Saviour.

SECTION III.—CATHOLICITY.

THE word *Church* (congregation) gradually losing its simple and Scriptural meaning, became at last the symbol of an undefined and awful authority,—an oracle whose utterances were

always in harmony with the interests of the prophet. Issuing from the gloom of mystery, and simulating the sacred dialect of antiquity, to question it seemed to betray not only temerity, but impiety. It took advantage of that respect for established authority which has been implanted in the human breast for the security of society, and ran it to excess so as to quench the light of reason and stifle the voice of conscience. This tendency to abuse authority, and generate an indolent, slavish, and timorous state of mind, is not confined to churches called Catholic. It belongs to our nature; and even those religious bodies who glory in their own reformation, are prone to fall back into superstition and despotism. Nothing is more natural or more common to churches, than to "begin in the spirit and end in the flesh."

This lesson is taught us by the first chapter in church history, as well as by all its later records. As we ascend towards the fountains of our religion, we arrive at an era of obscurity, and feel perplexed with the dreary prospect. But the sun often shines brightly behind a very gloomy cloud; and beyond the chilling region where the blind votaries of antiquity "believe and tremble," Faith soars with eagle pinions to the elevated plains of cheering light and verdant beauty. However dimly the outline of "*Ancient Christianity*" may be discerned amid the baleful fogs of the predicted apostacy, we can be at no loss to discover the heavenly form of the truly *Primitive* church, if we only read the Acts of the Apostles and their inspired Epistles. They and their disciples preached the gospel to Jew and Gentile; and when, in any particular place, a number of persons received the truth in the love of it, they began to meet together for worship. Each of these stated assemblies is called a church of Christ—a congregation of "*saints*," or "*faithful men*," in which the pure word of God was preached, and the ordinances of Christ duly administered. Thus were formed all the Apostolic churches of which we have the record in the New Testament. And we may observe a similar process going forward,

where the missionaries of different denominations are labouring at present among the heathen. The Greek word rendered "church" in the New Testament, and the corresponding Hebrew term translated "congregation" in the Old, mean simply an *assembly*—a number of persons called out, or convened.*

But, when we speak of *the* church in general, or the church of CHRIST, we must take in the whole body of the faithful in every land, in every sect, of every age, and view them as *one*. This aggregate of the people of God is called by the Apostle, "the general assembly and congregation of the first-born." It is frequently represented in the style of the sacred writers as a building, a temple, a vine, and a body of which CHRIST is the head. All these, and similar expressions, it is true, strongly teach the doctrine of the church's *unity*. But what is the nature of this unity? Undoubtedly it is *spiritual*, not ceremonial—effected not by a sacrament, but by a living faith; and its *essence* is not the ritual succession of a priesthood, but the holy bond of brotherhood—not *Episcopacy* but CHRISTIANITY.

Hence the early Christians were accustomed to call the whole church, wherever dispersed, or however locally distinguished, *ἐκκλησία καθολικὴ*—the catholic or universal church, comprehending all the particular churches of faithful men in every country—all who in *every place* called on the name of the Lord in sincerity and truth. *This* is the true idea of Catholicity. It is not the attribute of one exclusive community, spread through all nations, for none such ever existed except in the dreams of the enthusiastic subject of the Pope. The time, indeed, is coming fast, when Christianity will be the universal religion, vanquishing all the systems of error, and reigning unrivalled from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same. For this blessed consummation, we pray when we say, "Thy kingdom come."

The most numerous church is not therefore Catholic. If so, Buddhism would be more catholic than Christianity; and the

* *Εκκλησία* from *εκ*, out of; and *καλέω*, I call.

Bible would not be worthy of a hearing, if its claims were put to the vote of the world's population. There would be eight to one against it. The creed of China is more ancient and more extensively professed than that of Christendom.

Still less, does Catholicity imply the domination of a central power over all the flock of CHRIST, hedging it round with laws of uniformity, suspending salvation on a ceremony, and excluding from the covenant of mercy, for the want of conditions on which the covenant itself is silent. The word "Catholic" was used in primitive times, to designate neither the Church at Rome, nor the Churches in Greece, Asia, or Africa. It was the *generic* term. Excluding whatever in ceremony or form was *peculiar* to each, it expressed what was common to all the churches of the saints—rather to the saints, simply regarded as disciples of CHRIST. For His church is not an aggregate of communities, but of *individuals*. In the general assembly of the redeemed, we shall not appear in a corporate capacity, each body ranged under its own colours, and bound together by its peculiar code of discipline. There, all such distinctions will have vanished for ever, and the eye will rest only on those features by which we are proved to be children of God, and joint-heirs of Christ. The garments of such, washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb, need no ornamental badge to mark superiority. This would only mar the beautiful uniformity of holiness, and offend the impartial eye of our heavenly Father. This only is the holy catholic church,—and here only can be found the communion of *saints*. Yet how often do we find passages of Scripture intended to apply to this *spiritual* body, claimed by a particular hierarchy, and perverted into pretexts for the most insulting intolerance!

If any local church might claim to be the seat of supreme Apostolic power, the centre of Catholicity, the fountain-head of infallible authority, it was undoubtedly Jerusalem, where the Saviour taught in person and died—where he commanded his Apostles to *begin* their preaching—where the Holy Ghost

visibly descended on the infant church—where the first converts to the crucified Messiah were baptized—where the Apostles held the first council, and where for years they issued their infallible decrees. Besides, under the names of “Jerusalem,” and “Mount Zion,” many of the most splendid productions of the ancient prophets are addressed to the Christian Church; but this church, so gloriously founded, so signally honoured, whose rise and progress were illustrated by a light from heaven so resplendent—where is it? The mournful echoes answer “where?” Many centuries of ruin have witnessed its fall; and the region around is a vast spiritual Sahara. Henceforth the traveller may find there “an angel” of the Church of England and Ireland, but no trace of the Apostolic Church of Jerusalem. And yet a church that can boast none of its privileges, to which not a single promise of infallibility is addressed in the whole Bible, which is expressly threatened with excision from the true olive, as the consequence of pride—this church pretends to be the mother and mistress of all churches!

But, are the promises of CHRIST of none effect? Has he cast away his people, or forsaken his cause? God forbid. The church is the pillar of truth; but the pillar rests not upon the earth. It needs no throne, ecclesiastical or political, for its support; and is as independent of human establishment, and as free to move from place to place as was the Shekinah in the desert. Its light “cannot be hid;” but that light is HOLINESS as well as Truth. Or, rather it is truth shining through holiness. “Her Righteousness goes forth as *brightness*, and her salvation as a *lamp that burneth*.” The Church of Christ is indeed a city set on a hill, but “her walls and bulwarks are salvation;” and the holy hill on which she is founded—the mount on which her battlements are reared, is not any earthly locality. Rome, Paris, London, like Babylon of old, shall perish; but their fall may be the freedom and the triumph of the church. Certainly it cannot affect the stability of that city, whose foundation is Christ, whose walls are living stones,

and in whose streets righteousness flows down for ever. This is the new Jerusalem that cometh down from heaven, of which that of David was but an imperfect emblem. It is not of Rome the Psalmist speaks, when he declares, "And of ZION it shall be said, this and that man were born in her; and the Highest himself shall establish her. The Lord shall count, when he maketh up the people, that this and that man were born there." He will not count that this or that man was born an Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Independent, Baptist, or Methodist—a Churchman or a Dissenter—a Catholic or a Protestant—but that he was *born again* in Zion.

Into this community, ere long, all nations shall be gathered. Even dark Æthiopia shall stretch out her hands unto God, and will not be spurned from his throne. Among the citizens, there may be various tribes distinguished by costume and accent, and by different habitudes of thought and temper; but these are traces of her aboriginal nature, lingering among the new traits of character to give brighter relief to the work of the Holy Spirit. A community then, which has in some city a central source of visible authority binding on the conscience—whose head-quarters are on earth—whose power and perpetuity are identified with the stability of some throne or dynasty, may contain a *portion* of the Church of Christ; but the *spiritual* Catholic Church, such a community can never be!

The term *Catholic* is applied properly only to an aggregate of churches mutually independent, and co-ordinate in power, scattered through the world, and differing in externals; but held together by the bond of essential principles, and harmonised by brotherly love. Such is THE VISIBLE CHURCH. It has been often remarked, that the phrase *Roman Catholic* offers a contradiction in terms. How can a thing be particular and universal at the same time? A fixed locality manifestly excludes the idea of Catholicity. It "confines to a party what was meant for mankind."

Some of the reformed churches have involved themselves

more or less in the contradiction of the Church of Rome. If any of them have been stationary, lethargic, intolerant, latitudinarian, inefficient, perhaps a principal cause of so sad a failure may be found in the fact, that they are the Churches of England, Scotland, Geneva, Prussia, &c.* This nationality of churches has, in my judgment, not merely fettered them down to a particular soil, and interwoven their *discipline*, inextricably, with political and municipal laws, but it has infused into them a spirit of jealousy and exclusiveness, which is alien to the Gospel, and destructive of Christian unity. It did more. It paralysed benevolent effort for the salvation of souls. The civil power handed the people all over to one church, whose ministers were alone "authorised" to preach the Gospel to that people. The result of this on the side of the clergy, was the pride and negligence of well-secured possession; on that of the people, formality, and an awful amount of practical heathenism. The authority of the Christian ministry was made to depend on being educated in certain universities, ordained according to a certain form, and assuming the charge of a flock, in virtue of a political law—a flock of which (not the Holy Ghost, but) a "*Patron*," makes a man an overseer. Hence, churches "divided by a mountain or a frith," have shunned all friendly intercourse, and been to one another as Jews and Samaritans. Hence, too, the propagation of the Gospel, and the progress of the Reformation, have been identified with civil war and conquest, and been resisted, therefore, alike by national prejudice, by revenge, by the principle of self-defence, and by the host of mighty passions, which patriotism or party may awaken in the minds of the conquered or the oppressed. The history of European colonization furnishes mournful illustrations of this fact. Each church said, "The temple of the Lord are we!" and merged the spiritual power

* Even the Puseyites feel the inconvenience and absurdity of a *national* Catholic Church. "But if you please, do not use the expression, the Church of England, but the Church in England."—*Tract* xii. p. 8.

of the Gospel in the ascendancy of their creed. "They went back to the mount that might be touched, and built again the things that were destroyed." Each party attempted to confine the heavenly dove in their own cage. Warring against the genius of the Christian dispensation, they laboured to resuscitate an economy which expired with the Redeemer on Calvary, and which the hand of Providence had buried in the ruins of Jerusalem.

SECTION IV.—VISIBILITY OF THE CHURCH.

THE sacred writers deal largely in metaphors, and apply various similitudes to the same object, in order to represent it to the mind in different aspects. Now, if we dwell on any comparison *exclusively*, as setting forth the nature of an institution, overlooking all the other equally instructive representations of the same object, we not only exaggerate and distort it, but neglect the important lessons which the *other views* of it are designed to teach. The subject of this chapter furnishes numerous illustrations of this remark.

At one time, the Church of CHRIST is a human body, with all its members acting harmoniously in obedience to the will of its Divine Head; at another, it is a vine, deriving its life and fruitfulness from HIM, as the root and stem. Again, it is a temple, of which HE is the foundation, to whose worship and glory it is consecrated. It is a vineyard, of which He is the husbandman. More frequently it is a *kingdom*, of which He is the sovereign. Now, this kingdom is indisputably the same as *His church*; and yet, in connexion with it, figures are employed that seem almost to preclude the idea of *visibility*. For instance, "My kingdom is not of *this world*"—"The kingdom of God cometh not with *observation*"—"The kingdom of God is *within you*." It "consists not in meats nor drinks, nor divers washings, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." "The true worshippers" are to worship the

Father, not in holy cities with pompous ceremonials, but "in spirit and in truth;" and Paul speaks disparagingly of "carnal ordinances" and "bodily exercises"—of the mere *externals*, or *VISIBILITIES* of religion, in comparison with its unseen and impalpable power—its inward life.

Even were we to adopt the one-sided and preposterous reasoning of those who exalt the *church* above *CHRISTIANITY*, we might argue that the former must be ever *invisible* in the world. Our Lord says to his disciples, throughout all time, "Ye are the salt of the earth." Now, salt *disappears* in the mass which its savour pervades and purifies. Again, the Christian community is, in reference to the surrounding population, compared to *leaven* "HID" in a measure of meal! How shall we deduce the visibility of the church from such passages as these? Yet, why should they be overlooked in estimating the condition of the Redeemer's followers here below? And why should a single comparison of the church to "a city set on a hill, whose light cannot be hid," so fix our attention, and dazzle our eyes, that we can see nothing else? Every one of these similitudes has an important meaning; for it exhibits the Lord's people as exerting a certain influence, and should be viewed with reference to its special design and peculiar bearing on a given object.

Let this dictate of common sense guide us in examining the allusion to "a city on a hill," about which controversialists make such a noise. True, the Church of Christ should shine, and ever did shine, as "a city on a hill, whose light cannot be hid;" but what are we to infer from this? The perpetual existence of a *hierarchy* with a *church system*, conspicuous in its place of power, and there attracting the observation of the world? It was not thus with the Church of Christ in her best days. She rather hid herself from persecution, worshipped in obscurity, and watched over her children, like the anxious hen building her nest in secret places, that her brood might be protected from the birds of prey, hovering near to devour. She

taught from house to house, assembled her children in upper rooms; and, from the necessary secrecy of her proceedings, gave occasion, in after times, to grievous slanders without, and more grievous corruptions within, by the "initiation" and the "mysteries" which followed. At the time that the church was rapidly pervading the Roman world with her principles, and sapping the bulwarks of its mighty idolatry, she was known to learned men, in high places, only as a contemptible Jewish sect, whose faith was denounced as a detestable superstition, and its adherents as worthy of death! As visible, local institutions, they were so far from being like an illuminated city on a hill, that imperial inquisition could scarcely find them; and so little earthly, that it could not destroy them.* Yet, did her light shine before men! In what manner, we shall see just now.

We may ask by the way, if the "light" depends on any visible institution—that is, on any national, provincial, or local establishment of a priesthood and its rites—if such establishment be the "city on a hill"—how does it happen that the light expired throughout all the cities of Asia and Africa, where it once shone with much splendour, the places still remaining as ecclesiastical seats, but dark and desolate, as cities of the dead? The spirit of truth then may depart, and has departed, from the visible institution or hierarchy, (a fact which each church in turn, Greek, Roman, or Anglican, will admit as regards its rival,) and the question returns, what is the community whose light ever shines, and cannot be hid? and what is the nature of that light? Is it a priesthood that shines? *It* may be abandoned by the Holy Spirit, as we have repeatedly proved. Is it a form of worship? It may be utterly destitute of life and power. Is it a collection of creeds and canons? It may be a mere *dead letter*, shut up in libraries; or, if known to the people, only in dry, abstract, familiar summaries, vainly repeated without thought or feeling.

* "Virtus cripi numquam potest."

It is the TRUTH, indeed, that shines—not in *creeds*, however, but in *characters*—not in ecclesiastical forms, but in personal holiness! Every passage in the Bible that speaks of the Church of Christ as a light, will illustrate the truth of this assertion. This is the meaning of the prophet when he exclaims, “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.” It is her “RIGHTEOUSNESS” that “goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burneth.”* Paul speaks of *all* believers at Ephesus, and not of the pastors only when he says, “Ye were once *darkness*, but now are ye *light* in the Lord: walk as children of light.” And that he refers not to any thing like a “church system,” but to personal conduct and character, is clear from what follows:—“For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.”† These moral qualities constituted their light. Their sanctity made them luminous. This is what caused the faith of the Romans to be spoken of throughout the whole world, and that of the Thessalonians to spread abroad in every place, so that they were *examples* to all that believed in Macedonia and Achaia, because they had “turned from idols to serve the living and true God.”‡ It is in this sense too that the Corinthians were “manifestly declared to be the epistle of CHRIST, . . . written, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God;—not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart”—“*known and read of all men*,” and bearing triumphant witness to the divine warrant of Paul’s ministry.§ In these “seals,” which spoke so convincingly to the world, he gloried far more than in his miracles, visions, and revelations, resting his authority chiefly on that very evidence which Churchmen spurn, in the case of Protestant pastors and missionaries—namely, the manifest blessing of Christ on their labours.

When our Lord warned his disciples against false prophets,

* Isaiah lx. 1; lxii. 1.

† Eph. v. 8, 9.

‡ Rom. i. 8; 1 Thess. i. 7, 8.

§ 2 Cor. iii. 2, 3.

he did not bid them ask, “who *sent* them? or by whom were they *ordained*?” He gave them a far better test—“By their *fruits* ye shall know them.”* If you want to know whether a tree is good or bad, you do not judge by its blossoms, however beautiful; still less do you think of asking, By *whom* was the tree planted? Yet the question would be quite as pertinent and rational as that so frequently and insultingly put by Churchmen to those whom the Lord of the vineyard has owned and blessed, by crowning them with the best of fruits in the greatest abundance!

These remarks will not, I hope, be without their use in preparing us to trace the Church’s visibility. But the context of the very passage, so often urged against Protestants in proof of the non-existence of *their* churches before the Reformation, demonstrates that our Saviour’s reference applies neither to Erastian establishments, nor to Catholic hierarchies.

“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. . . . Let your light so shine before men, *that they may see your good works*, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”† Light cannot be hid, unless as the monastic system did, you take the candle and put it under a bushel. So long as Christians are in the world, and are *faithful*, they will be marked and conspicuous characters. You may take “orders” and “enter the church;” or take the veil, and immure yourself in a nunnery, without leaving the world. No earthly institution affords an asylum from the “devil, the world, and the flesh.” The passions cannot be excluded by “stony limits,” nor killed by haircloth, nor changed by sacraments. The distinction between the church and the world, is moral and spiritual. The former has put off the *works* of darkness, and put on the armour of light. It is separate, indeed, as light is separate from the darkness with which it mingles, which it streaks and dissipates. In a word, the light of the church is nothing but the virtue and piety of the true disciples

* Matthew vii. 16.

† Matthew v. 14—16.

of CHRIST, "holding forth the word of life"—not politically, nationally, sacramentally, or ecclesiastically, but personally, socially, congregationally; *with the heart believing unto righteousness*, with the mouth making confession unto salvation, and with her intellectual gifts and pecuniary offerings, propagating the truth as it is in JESUS to the ends of the earth.

If this be the only Scriptural sense in which the Church of Christ can shine before men—if this be the true visibility, it only remains to see whether it can be traced through those gloomy ages of ignorance and slavery, when the Papacy maintained its disastrous ascendancy in Europe.

It is true then that we cannot find the word PROTESTANT previous to the Reformation; but principles do not depend for their existence on *names*. Change these as you will, those are still the same. The disciples were called *Christians* first at Antioch—probably by the Romans, (for the word is of Latin formation,) to distinguish them from other Jews, as the followers of CHRIST. It is remarkable, that the sacred writers never use it. With them the Christian converts were designated *believers, disciples, the brethren, saints, faithful, &c.*

Now, the question at issue is, whether there have not always been, since the time that Rome began to claim an authority as "*mistress of all other churches*," societies, or communities, *protesting* by word, and deed, and suffering, against her usurpations and corruptions—appealing against her to the Bible—and whether these communities did not agree in all essential points with the reformed churches. True, these bodies received from their enemies many opprobrious names, borrowed from some able champion on their side—from some powerful protector—some place where they most flourished, or other accidental circumstance. They did not invent or adopt these names, and are not answerable for them. The word Protestant, whose origin is well known, is indeed modern; but so is the word *Transubstantiation*, which was unheard of for twelve hundred years, until it was invented by Innocent III., though

the dogma which it now designates had existed for some centuries before. And if the name and thing must stand or fall together, the *Real Presence* must be given up as a novelty. The Popes take new names when elevated to the chair of Peter, as they facetiously call it; but surely they do not thereby lose their personal identity!

The Protestants of the middle ages have been also called *heretics*, and denounced as vile, abominable, wild, wicked, and so on; but this character was given them by their persecutors and exterminators! Would you take the character of the West India Negroes from the Jamaica planters? or of the Poles from the Russian autocrat? Protestants should remember, that the tyranny of Rome, in the dark ages, allowed nothing to go abroad, or survive to her disadvantage, that she could possibly suppress; and that her policy has ever been to revile her adversaries. Look into any Roman Catholic publication *now*—I do not say on the continent, where there is no free press or public opinion to dread exposure from, but here in Great Britain and Ireland; and if the writer proposes to give information about Protestant sects, what sort of information is it? Were posterity to learn the character and history of Methodism only from Catholics, what a hideous picture they would have to look on! How unlike the original! So with other Protestant bodies. In Rome's vocabulary they are all heretics, fanatics, wolves in sheep's clothing, deceivers, vile corrupters of Scripture, perverting the faithful, and profaning religion. I might put it to the Catholic himself, "Is the Catholic picture of Protestantism like?" If all our Protestant literature since the Reformation, and all its monuments were abolished, what could future ages know of those mighty nations to whom humanity owes almost every thing in arts, science, civilization, and philanthropy—all that is the glory of these times? Dr. M'HALE is one of the most consistent Churchmen we have; let *him* write a history of Protestant Europe, and how much truth would be in it? Or, let Dr. PUSEY, who regards the

Reformation as a great calamity, and the Revolution of 1688 as a national sin, write such a history; and mark how he would describe our non-episcopal communities! "If such things are done in the green tree, what would be done in the dry?" If Catholicism bears such amazingly false witness against her neighbours now, how must it have been in a dark, credulous, bigotted, persecuting era, when, flushed with conscious power, her wrath burned freely, and she was drunk with the blood of the saints! But, after all, Truth cannot be smothered. It struggles on undying to the hour of freedom—and that is the hour of its triumph.

Let the reader keep in mind the remarks already made on the *Predicted Apostacy*, and then weigh the extorted testimonies now about to be deduced from Roman Catholic writers. The *authorities* are taken from *The Variations of Popery*—a work whose accuracy is unimpeachable, and whose chief value consists in its faithful transcription of Catholic authorities:—

The ancient Protestants of Western or European Christendom were distinguished by various appellations, such as Cathari, Leonists, Bohemians, Waldenses, Albigenses, and Wickliffites; but their faith was one, and they were unanimous in their testimony against Rome. The charge of Manicheanism and Arianism, so often made against these people, has been fully refuted by the most eminent writers, including Roman Catholics. It is disproved, according to Mozeri, by the silence of original records, the admissions of Papal historians, and their own confessions of faith. Synods, councils, chronicles, inquisitors, when treating of the alleged delinquencies of these Protestants, drop not a hint in reference to the points just mentioned. A host of Roman Catholic historians bear testimony to the orthodoxy of the Albigenses on the subject of the Trinity; while their own declarations of faith, put forth at different times, show that they held, in all essential points, the same faith, for which, at a later period, Luther so nobly contended. Individuals, no doubt, of erroneous opinions and

loose principles, made common cause with them against church tyranny—a natural and unavoidable coincidence, which their enemies took advantage of, as men of similar spirit do in the present day, who write down Evangelical Dissenters in the same catalogue with “Papists, Socinians, Socialists, and Atheists.” This wicked device of involving good men struggling against wrong, in the infamy of the ungodly and profane, is as old as priestcraft.

So much for the *orthodoxy* of the Waldenses. Their *antiquity* is equally unquestionable. RAINERUS, a Dominican Inquisitor, commissioned to ascertain their principles, character, and history, is compelled to declare that Waldensianism is the ancientest heresy, and existed, according to some, from the time of Silvester, and, according to others, *from the days of the Apostles*. This inquisitor, who lived in the 13th century, informs us (and Seysel and Alexander concur in the statement) that these simple inhabitants of the Alpine valleys date their own Protestantism (such it was in fact, though not in name,) from the Papacy of Silvester, regarding Leo, who flourished in the reign of Constantine, as their founder. Thus, when Rome commenced her career of worldly domination, they, as in duty bound, separated, preferring to suffer affliction with CHRIST and his Apostles, and to cleave to the truth at all hazards.

But, perhaps these primitive Protestants were a mere handful of miserable shepherds and peasants, and therefore not worthy to be named as witnesses of the truth, and churches of Christ. Supposing that they were poor in this world's goods, few and feeble, has not God chosen the weak and despised, to confound the mighty and the noble? Did he not select such instruments to overturn idolatry; and why not to withstand the Papacy? Was not the church to fly before the dragon into the wilderness, and to witness in sackcloth?

But their numbers were not so despicable—quite the reverse. “They multiplied,” says Vignier, “wonderfully in France, as

well as in other countries of Christendom. They had a great number of patrons and adherents in Germany, France, Italy, and especially in Lombardy. Grievous are the lamentations of Roman Catholic historians on this subject. Nangis (An. 1207) says, they "were infinite in number." Rainerus confesses, that "there was scarcely a country in which this sect was not found." It was then a *Catholic* Church! Sanderus assures us, that "they multiplied throughout *all lands*." Cæsarius, that "they infected a *thousand cities*;" while Ciaconius complains that they had corrupted "the whole Latin world." "There was *scarcely any region*," adds Gretzer, "that remained free and untainted from this pestilence." Popliner, Matthew Paris, Thuanus, and Moreri represent the Waldenses as spread through all the European coasts, as appearing in Gaul, Spain, England, Scotland, Italy, Germany, Bohemia, Saxony, Poland, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Dalmatia, Piedmont, Sicily, Calabria, Pomerania, Sarmatia, Constantinople, Philadelphia, &c. &c. In some of these places, their numbers are described as "*prodigious*"—"like the sand of the sea without number!"

Truly, God did not leave himself without witnesses in the darkest and most apostate times! How mighty are the energies of truth, when these people could withstand inquisitorial cruelty, as well as crusading fanaticism and tyranny, for two hundred years! Such was "the patience of the saints!"

Benedict reckons the Albigensian army against Count Montfort at 100,000 men. The French, according to the same historian, sent 300,000 warriors, who, under the holy banners of the cross, went to combat the heretics of Lanquedoc. Waldensian bravery, even according to his partial relation, withstood for near two hundred years, the vigilance of pontiffs, the piety of bishops, the zeal of monarchs, and the magnanimity of warriors; and injured the church of the West, as much as the infidels in the East. The heterodox army of the Albigenses, adds the historian, had nearly, on one occasion, overwhelmed

the holy warriors of the cross. Any other hero but Montfort, if Benedict may be believed, would have despaired of success, and abandoned his conquests. The church could oppose to the storm only prayers, tears, and groans; while the Protestants in triumphant anticipation, hoped to establish heresy on the ruins of Romanism. *

Nor did these people neglect the education of their youth, even in an age of barbarous ignorance. It was computed that the single diocese of Passau contained forty Waldensian schools for a Waldensian population of 80,000. And so highly esteemed were they for their intelligence, virtue, public spirit, and piety, that, according to Bernard, owing to their influence, "the Roman temples were left without people, the people without pastors, and the pastors without respect." Distinguished Roman Catholic writers, including the bitterest inquisitors and the blindest bigots, have reluctantly admitted the pre-eminent virtue and sanctity of the Waldensian Christians. Rainerus acknowledges their "show of piety and integrity before men." Calvinists in doctrine, they proved their faith by their works. It was natural that their inquisitorial prosecutor should call it a mere "show." But even he could not deny "their sobriety, modesty, chastity, and temperance, with their aversion to taverns, balls, vanity, anger, scurrility, detraction, levity, swearing, and falsehood." He grants that young and old, male and female, were addicted to learning and teaching, night and day; and that he had seen a Waldensian rustic who repeated Job word for word; and many who perfectly knew the whole of the New Testament. Another declares, that their purity of life excelled that of other Christians. The French King admitted their superiority to himself and his Catholic subjects. Their forgiveness of enemies—their love of peace—their dislike of litigation—their industry, skill, fidelity, loyalty, liberality, and integrity, extorted the approbation of their persecutors themselves. From the same hostile witnesses, we learn

* Edgar, *Variations*, p. 27.

that their doctrines were the same as those of the Reformation, and that they anticipated Luther, in distinctly and loudly protesting, even unto blood, against all the peculiar dogmas of the Church of Rome;—and yet, with amazing hardihood, or lamentable ignorance, Protestants are incessantly asked—“*Where was your religion before Luther?*” Where? Flourishing in the hearts and lives of tens of thousands of confessors, scattered through all the nations of Europe! Congregated in cities whose trade they improved—cultivating the valleys of the Alps which sheltered them from the storms of persecution—and bidding defiance to the crusading armies of Rome for centuries, they shone as almost the only lights then in the Western world!

In the *East*, the Pope never made much progress. The GREEK Church has as good a claim to Apostolicity and Catholicity as the Roman, which she excommunicates for schism and heresy. The NESTORIANS and JACOBITES, admitted by Roman authors to have been only *nominal* heretics, have existed in a state of independence since the rise of the Papacy, spread in vast numbers over the nations of Asia, and keeping far nearer to Scriptural simplicity and purity of doctrine than either the Greeks or the Romans. But the most anti-papal church in the East is the ARMENIAN, which has “equally withstood the oppressions of Islamism, and the allurements of Popery. Preserving the Bible, their faith, says Benhanan, is a transcript of Biblical purity. The Armenian Patriarch of Antioch, says Otho, superintends more than a thousand bishops. *

* Edgar, p. 39, &c.

CHAPTER XV.

BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.

ONE of the *Oxford Tracts* (No. 67) is a treatise by Dr. Pusey on baptism. It is an octavo volume of four hundred heavy pages, remarkable for its cumbrous, patristical, and liturgical learning—its impassioned veneration for antiquity—its trembling love of mystery—its horror of free-thinking—in a word, its *ultra* Catholicism. Certainly, we should not expect much in the way of sound reasoning from a writer who sets out with the statement, that “Scripture *evidence* is throughout proposed to those who *believe*—not to those who believe not!” On this principle, it seems, the Doctor wrote his book; for it is as little calculated to convince the sceptical by its arguments, as it is to please the enlightened by its style;—which is as wearisome as any thing we have met for a long time, excepting always what has come from his own compeers in the Oxford University. Why these writers have been extolled for their fine taste and the charms of their composition, we are utterly at a loss to understand, unless we regard the laudation as a part of the preconcerted policy by which they have gained such an amazing influence in the church. Dr. Pusey’s mind, in particular, seems to groan under the incubus of superstition; his ideas come out in dim array, and, like a foundered regiment,

march on laborously to a tune of most somniferous solemnity. The motto of the volume is very appropriate :—

“What sparkles in that lucid flood
Is water, by gross mortals eyed;
But seen by faith,—’tis blood
Out of a dear friend’s side.

“CHRISTIAN YEAR.”

Wonderful are the effects ascribed to baptism by this learned writer, as the following extracts will show :—“Our justification is imputed to us, not through our feelings, but *through* baptism,”—(p. 20.) “The means ordained by Christ himself for the remission of sin, or for justification,”—(Ibid.) “The person baptised becomes thereby a member of Christ, which one saying, comprehends more than all which men’s or angels’ thoughts can conceive of blessedness,”—(p. 21.) “The source of every other blessing,”—(p. 22.) Baptism “takes us out of our relation to Adam, and makes us actual members of his Son,”—(p. 23.) “There is no hint that regeneration can be obtained in any other way but by baptism,”—(p. 27.) “No change of *heart* then, or of the affections—*no repentance, however radical—no faith*, no life, no love, come up to the idea of this birth from above; . . . a gift coming down from God, and given to faith through baptism; yet not the work of faith, but the operation of *water* and the Holy Spirit,”—(p. 47.) “The water sanctified is the womb of our new birth,”—(p. 48.) “By baptism we are saved—*not by faith only!*”—(p. 55.) The answer of a good conscience, mentioned by Peter, is represented as confessing unto salvation the truths of the *creed* delivered to him. “Baptism is the *mark* of God upon us, which his mercy has been more powerful to retain, we trust, than our sins to efface. In baptism, we were buried, planted, crucified with Christ,”—(p. 96.) “All infants, therefore, must have died to sin,”—(p. 106.) “All the baptised have put on Christ,”—(p. 109.) “Whoever of us has been baptised, was thereby incorporated into

Christ." "All the texts that speaks of our being *in Christ* are referred to baptism, by which alone that union can be effected,"—(pp. 114, 115.) "Baptism is putting off the old man and his deeds,"—(p. 178.) It is "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."—*Passim*. "The gift of baptism is above all spiritual gifts," (p. 209,) "yet this gift Simon Magus also obtained,"—(p. 233.) "As *after receiving* the body of the Lord, Satan entered into Judas!! . . . so after the unworthy receiving of baptism came he into Simon Magus." "He was born in vain—perhaps it had been better for him not to have been born!"—(pp. 236—238. "God has in a wonderful manner, for his own glory, made baptism effectual, when administered in mockery by heathens on a heathen stage!"—(p. 237.)

The passage through the Red Sea, and over Jordan, were types of baptism; and all the predictions in regard to the illumination and purification of the church refer to this awful rite—this "daily miracle"—performed in "the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness;" which is, good reader, nothing but the water of baptism. Moreover, Dr. Pusey approves of the Catholic practice of *anointing* with oil in baptism, and the ceremonies for casting out the "evil spirit that lurks" in the infant (pp. 58—60); and signing the cross on eyes, mouth, nose, forehead, ears, breast, shoulders, &c.; as well as the three-fold *immersion* in the names of the three persons of the Trinity."—(p. 144-5.)

No wonder Dr. Pusey should say, this doctrine "lies, it is confessed, at the root of the whole system;" and that "it is the point from which the *two opposite systems which divide the church diverge*."—(p. 40.) In full harmony with the extracts above given, Mr. Neman declares, that "baptism is the hand of God conveying the sinner's justification; while faith is only the sinner's own hand receiving the blessing."—(Tracts, No. 90, p. 12.)

That such a tenet should have obtained credence so easily

and so generally among the professed believers of the Gospel, furnishes a melancholy proof of the fatal facility with which churches slide off from the only foundation on which they can stand—*faith* in the merits of the Saviour. It may well seem strange to a reader of the New Testament, that *its* ministers should set up a *form which man enacts, as necessary to salvation*, and that a kingdom “which consists not in meats or drinks, or *divers washings*,” should be *entered* ONLY by the application of water to the body, and *always* entered by the use of that infallible ceremony! The whole of the teaching of our Lord and his Apostles, as to the spirit of his economy, would lead us to quite a contrary conclusion.

I need not go over the ground which I have already traversed, to prove the *spirituality*, and the free, unformal, untechnical, unceremonial genius of the present dispensation. But the reader should bear in mind the considerations urged in that part of our work, to feel what an ASTONISHING ANOMALY it is, to make a mere ceremony the regenerator of the soul—the creator of light and purity in the heart! Our great Teacher seemed to take pains to turn attention from outward observances to moral dispositions. It is not that which goeth into the mouth that defileth a man, but what proceeds from the heart. It is in vain to cleanse the outside of the cup, while within it is full of uncleanness. It is no mark of true religion to be scrupulous about ceremonies, and to put faith in sacraments.* Such is the spirit of the New Testament. The Gospel set men free from the yoke of ceremonial bondage—a yoke imposed till the time of renovation. And now “neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but *a new creature*.”†

That regeneration was to be effected by the initiatory ceremony of the Christian Church, is by no means to be inferred from any thing connected with the baptism of *John*. His de-

* John iv. 21—23; Matt. xv. 20; xxiii. 23; Luke xi. 3—8; Rom. xiv. passim.

† Gal. v. 1; Heb. ix. 10; Gal. vi. 15.

claration was, that he baptised "with water unto repentance," as a *sign* that they should change their minds, and forsake their sins, and bring forth fruits meet for a change of heart. But that change was not to be effected by the water, but by another agent, and at a future time. Christ was to baptise them with the Holy Spirit. Accordingly we read, that our Lord appeared to the disciples after the resurrection, and said, "John truly baptised with water; but ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." * John baptised their bodies with water; Christ baptised their minds with a holy influence, as it had been foretold by the prophet—"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be purified; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I purify you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." † Who but Jesus can give a new heart, and a right spirit? Are not Christians *his* workmanship, created anew unto good works? How did Christ sprinkle the church? Not literally with water, but spiritually with a holy influence. *He* did not, in person, ceremonially baptise the people; nor was the rite the *instrument* even of that internal change. By the inspired Apostles men were not baptised, *in order* to be converted, but because they *had been* converted. They were born of the Spirit into the kingdom of Christ, before they were initiated by the application of water into the visible church. The Gospel narrative gives us no instance of conversion to God *after* baptism, and *in consequence* of it. The cases of Judas, Simon Magus, Ananias, Sapphira, &c. prove that the sacrament has no necessary tendency to change the heart; and the history of every Christian nation, and of every church, furnishes an awful corroboration of the fact. ‡

* Matt. iii. 11, 12; Acts i. 5.

† Ezek. xxxvi. 25.

‡ Of the mode of Christian baptism, I am not called on to say any thing, nor am I at all inclined to dispute about such matters. The most beautifully constructed argument, and the most convincing I ever met on the subject, will be found in a series of articles in the *Congregation Magazine*, commencing in January, 1841. No one should make up his mind without studying them.

If baptism be regeneration, then Christendom is regenerated! The nations of Europe are spiritually-minded—meek and lowly in heart—pure, sober, righteous, pious—denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts! Their fruits are the fruits of the Spirit, and they abound in love, joy, and peace! Oh, what a delusion! John baptised for repentance; but did repentance follow in the multitudes that crowded round him on the banks of Jordan? Had Jerusalem and all Judea repented, the nation would not have endured the calamities that so soon befell it,—nor provoked them by its subsequent iniquities. Christendom has been baptised for *regeneration*; but has it brought forth fruits meet for regeneration? Regeneration is frequently associated with other things besides baptism—with faith, with the Gospel, with the Word. Shall we then have “Believing regeneration,” “Gospel regeneration,” “Verbal regeneration,” as well as Baptismal regeneration? And if not, why? *

Baptism is, indeed, mentioned in connexion with regeneration, naturally, as the divinely-appointed and most expressive *sign* or emblem of that vital change. The picture and the original, the representation and the thing represented, the sign and the thing signified, are often confounded in common discourse, without any risk of their being mistaken for one another by the hearer. Besides, baptism is a public, ceremonial declaration, or confession of the belief, that its subject, when adult, has passed from death unto life; or, when an infant, of the hope that he will undergo that blessed change in answer to the prayer of faith. These remarks will be amply borne out by an examination of the Scriptures. For example:—“He that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved.” † Here the rite is represented as a ceremonial confession of the *faith* which alone saves. There is a most remarkable variation in the phrase that follows:—“He that believeth not shall be damned.” It is not said he that is not *baptised* shall be damned. There

* See the able articles on Puseyism in *The Presbyterian Review*.

† Mark xvi. 16.

is no such sentence in the Bible. The baptising is only an adjunct or appendage to the faith; which is the principal and the essential thing. I need not crowd my pages with the almost innumerable passages in which we are taught the doctrine of salvation by faith—that he that believeth “shall be saved”—“shall not come into condemnation”—“hath everlasting life”—“will be raised up at the last day”—“is justified freely from all things”—has “peace with God”—has “received the atonement,” &c.;—showing that we are saved absolutely by faith without the deeds of the law, or ceremonies, or forms of any kind. What are the first chapters of Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, and some powerful passages to the Galatians and Ephesians, but an elaborate and irresistible argument that we are *justified*—that is, pardoned and accepted—made children of God and heirs of glory—by *faith ONLY*; though Dr. Pusey says emphatically not?

“Repentance towards God and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ,” are the grand essentials of salvation; and in the work of the Spirit on the heart, they are inseparable. When Peter, on the day of Pentecost, exhorted the multitudes to trust in Christ, he said, “Repent and be baptised.”* Repentance precedes baptism; the former is the substance, the latter is the ceremony. Christ calls forth the soul alive from the sepulchre of sin; the minister merely pulls off the grave-clothes and puts on an outer garment, emblematic of the new life, which he can neither give nor take away. When we inquire who were entitled to baptism, the answer is, those who repented—who “gladly received the word”—who “*believed*”—who had “received the Holy Ghost”—“whose heart the Lord opened;”† persons, in fact, who believed the Gospel, and were, by their faith, introduced *already* into the kingdom of Christ. The entrance to that kingdom is called emphatically, “THE DOOR OF FAITH.”‡

* Acts xxxviii. 41.

† See Acts viii. 12; x. 47; xvi. 14, 31.

‡ Acts xiv. 27.

The jailor at Philippi first believed, and was saved, after which he was baptised, and his whole family. It was so with Lydia and her household. In the house of Cornelius, Peter demands—"Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptised, who *have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?*" They had received the heavenly influence first, and then followed the outward and visible sign. The invisible grace was *before* the sacrament, and wholly independent of it. The absence of a corporeal sign could not make void the spiritual reality. Supposing that some bigoted priests had been there, and *had* forbidden water, would that have banished the Holy Ghost, and re-converted the new-made children of God into children of Satan? The priest may condemn—may forbid water—but "it is God that *justifieth*;" and every justified person is not only pardoned, but baptised by the Spirit. When Peter himself refers to the heathen converts, how does he say they washed away their sins and were purified? Here are his words:—"God which knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, *purifying their hearts* BY FAITH?"

He does not say, by *baptism*. It is true, that Paul was called on at his conversion to "arise and wash away his sins;"* but that was plainly in an emblematical and ceremonial sense; for Paul in his teaching laid no stress on baptism—never gloried in his *own*—would not lose his time performing the ceremony, but left it to inferior hands. If, however, it were the medium by which *souls* were created anew, it would be unspeakably the most glorious work that ever man was permitted to engage in! yet Paul had a far more glorious work; "Christ (said he) sent me not to baptise, but to PREACH the Gospel." Egregiously, therefore, do the Puseyites differ from Apostolic authority, when they presume to say that "the sacraments—not preaching—are the sources of divine grace." Neither

* Acts xxii. 16.

should be called a *SOURCE* ; but as a means of grace, preaching stands pre-eminent over all sacraments and ceremonies. When Peter declares—"Baptism doth now save us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ," lest any should imagine that he ascribed this effect to the mere application of water to the body, as if *that* had in it some occult and saving virtue, he immediately adds in a parenthesis—"NOT the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the *answer of a good conscience toward God.*" * Manifestly the material element of water can have nothing to do with the *conscience*. That can *renew* no man in the spirit of his mind. It can awaken no thought nor feeling ; it cannot engender repentance or love, or hope or joy. It were as rational to cast your seed upon the billows of the sea, and expect a crop in harvest, as to expect that the moral virtues, and the answer of a good conscience toward God, would result from the *opus operatum* of baptism. To use the word *church* in such a connexion, is merely to confound the unthinking by conjuring with a mystical name.

Regeneration is uniformly represented in Scripture to be the *immediate* work of God, and in such a manner that it cannot depend on any rite performed by man. Indeed, it is a work which only God can perform. Hence, it is said, that the members of Christ's Church are "born of the SPIRIT"—they are "transformed by the *renewing of the mind*"—being in Christ Jesus they are "*new creatures* ; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new"—they are "*HIS workmanship, created anew unto good works*"—they have put on the *new man*, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. What Paul says of circumcision is equally true of baptism—in Christ neither avails any thing, *but a new creature*. James teaches the same doctrine :—"Of his *own will* begat he us"—(not with the water of baptism, but) "with the *word of truth*, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures." Peter expresses the same truth thus :—"Being born again,

* 1 Peter, iii. 21.

not of corruptible seed (or corruptible *water*) but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." How studiously does the Apostle John guard against the conceits of Churchmen when speaking on this subject! How do men become *sons of God*? Why, they are born—not of *blood*; (that is, by *natural* descent)—not of the will of the *flesh*; (that is, not by their own native energies or efforts)—not of the will of *man*; (that is, not by the will and power of the *priest*)—but of *GOD*.^{*} Here is an express and peremptory exclusion of every other possible agency, but God's own almighty grace in regenerating the soul, and bringing it into his kingdom!

Moreover, there are *effects* resulting from this change of a very visible and palpable nature, which we know baptism does not, and cannot produce. I need mention only a few of these:—"Whosoever is born of God doth not practice sin; his seed remaineth in him and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." "Whatsoever is born of God *overcometh the world*; and this is the victory that *overcometh the world*, even our faith. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him. He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not."†

If to be baptised is to be born again, then mark what will follow! Whosoever is *baptised* doth not commit sin; he cannot sin, because he is baptised. He that is *baptised* *overcometh the world*: this is the victory that *overcometh the world*, even your baptism. Whosoever is baptised loves God, and all whom he has redeemed. Being justified by *baptism*, we have peace with God; and so on. If you substitute baptism for faith, and the various phrases importing regeneration in the New Testament, as Dr. Pusey does, will you not have *another Gospel*, as

^{*} John iii. 5; Rom. xii. 2; 2 Cor. v. 17; Eph. ii. 10; Eph. iv. 22, 24; Col. iii. 10, 11; 1 Peter, i. 23; James i. 18; 1 John, 1, 13.

† John i. 13; 1 John, iii. 9; v. 1, 4, 18.

different from the true one as light is from darkness? It might as well be contended, that the Pascal Lamb was the Saviour of the world, as that baptism is regeneration!

Confirmation has been represented by some Churchmen as a kind of appendage to baptism—as a rite less important than its predecessor—and a mere supplement to the regenerating work of water. If so, they are very inconsistent; for while a simple priest can perform the greater work of regenerating the soul, none but the bishop can confirm it. The notion of baptism which I have refuted, is very pernicious; it works the very worst results in practice; it gives a fatal tendency to the whole course of procedure on the part of the clergy, regarding the salvation of the people. In the first place, parents are deluded by the belief that their infants are *lost*, if the minister has not been in time to sprinkle them with water. Jesus cannot take up the little child in his arms and bless it, till the priest arrives; and thus the salvation of these immortal creatures, before they can discern the right hand from the left, is dependent on the indolence, the illness, the caprice, the distance of the minister, or other ten thousand accidents, which may delay the rite of baptism till the child has died! Christ is there, but he cannot act, because the priest, who is his right hand, is sick or asleep, or on a journey! In consequence of this the dear departed infant “can never see the face of God!”

In the second place, all baptised persons are “the members of Christ, the children of God, and the inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.” All this they were *made* in baptism. The priest made them members of Christ’s “body, of his flesh, and of his bones”—vitaly uniting them to the living head in heaven—engrafting them in the mystical vine—adopting them into the redeemed family of God—washing out their sins—renewing their hearts—and constituting them the heirs of God, and joint-heirs of Christ! All this the Roman and Oxford Priests profess to accomplish. Their water-made heirs of glory are all

addressed as “faithful brethren in Christ;” “washed, sanctified, and justified.” They are not of the world, but the church; they belong to the kingdom of light, and love, and peace; and this is the condition of every one that is born in any of the parishes of Great Britain and Ireland! The *whole nation is the body of Christ*—though chiefly a putrid mass of unbelief and vice! This mass of baptised ignorance and impiety, is taught to consider itself as converted to God; and should sins be committed, penitence can wash them out, or *good works* can atone for them. But whether this be the case or not, all may be well with them in the end. The Roman Catholic can send for the priest, confess, be absolved, receive the Eucharist, be anointed, and work his passage to heaven through purgatory, should there be none to pay for masses for his soul. But if there be, he may hope for a speedy release from the fire. In the Church of England, it seems salvation is far more easily and certainly obtained: all whom she baptises, heaven, as a matter of course, receives. The title of the *heirs of God* is in the parish register. Whatever his life has been—however vile and wicked—he is sent at once to glory. And, on the other hand, no matter how holy he may be, if he has not been baptised by a church minister, his body is denied the holy rites of burial in consecrated ground; and, of course, his soul must be consigned to outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Hear the church:—“For as much as it hath pleased Almighty God of his great mercy *to take unto himself* the soul of our dear brother here departed, we therefore commit his body to the ground—earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, *in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life.*” Unutterably awful is this masterpiece of satanic policy—the delusion of Baptismal Regeneration!

CHAPTER XVI.

THE REAL PRESENCE—TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

It is contended by Catholics, and admitted by many Protestants, that the words, “This is my body,” *literally* understood, denote a change of the substance of the bread into the substance of our Saviour’s person; and, according to the Anglicans, they certainly teach that his body is really present in the Eucharist, *together with* the “sacred elements.” The doctrine of consubstantiation does not require a special consideration; the arguments against transubstantiation will sufficiently refute the twin-absurdity.

The Church of Rome teaches, that “in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist there is, *really* and *substantially*, the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* This astounding doctrine is built principally on the words of the institution—“This is my body,” &c. As I write chiefly with a view to Catholic readers, I wish to demonstrate to them, that the passage cannot bear the interpretation which their church assigns to it. This will be done from Reason, Philosophy, and Scripture.

* Creed of Pius IV., Art. 5.

SECTION I.—THE RATIONAL ARGUMENT.

I ALWAYS suspect the creed that cannot be defended without vilifying reason. It reminds one of a man who should dig up the foundation of a house, in order more effectually to prop its walls. It is the province of Reason to ascertain whether God has revealed his will to men—to inquire into the meaning of his revelation; and when that is found, her business is to submit to the heavenly teaching. She need not cavil about the *how*, but embrace the *fact*, and adore the wisdom that ordained it. What is above her capacity, she has no right to question. But if the thing which purports to be a revelation from God, shocks her first principles, and does violence to her unavoidable, universal dictates, that is enough: it cannot come from the Author of the human mind; and His honour calls loudly for its rejection. This is precisely the case with transubstantiation. Such a pyramid of absurdity would prove the tomb of any revelation that pretended to consecrate the monstrous pile.

Now that bread should be changed into the *divinity* of Christ, is wholly incompatible with the nature of God. He is self-existent and eternal, and cannot be made to be where he was not before. He is a Spirit, omnipresent, omniscient, almighty. How can a piece of dead matter, sprung from the earth, ground in a mill, and baked in a pan, be changed into the substance of the deity—I do not say, by a sinful mortal, whose breath is in his nostrils, but even by omnipotence itself? The man that believes this must have faith, not only to remove mountains, but to swallow them. I would sooner give a priest credit for eating up the globe on which we tread, than for achieving such a climax of impossibilities.

The nature of a *human body* equally forbids the thought of such a change. Objects are known by their distinguishing qualities; those properties which constitute their peculiar nature, and are essential to their existence. Every one knows

what a living human body is; and what are its attributes. I need not describe them. A child would laugh at me, if I attempted to describe to him wherein his father differs from a loaf! Now, be it remembered, that Jesus became a "PERFECT MAN"—perfect in members, features, stature, faculties, feelings: perfect in mind and body. This the Church of Rome admits; and the catechism of the Council of Trent states the bread and wine are not only changed into the body and blood, but even into the "bones and nerves." *

Now, to meet all cavils about the spirituality of our Lord's *material* body, he assured his disciples after his resurrection, that he was not a spirit; for, said he, a spirit "hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." Besides this, he eat and drank, and exhibited his wounded body, to show that he was the identical person who had been crucified and buried. Here then is a test furnished by our Saviour himself, and exactly in point. The priest holds up the *Host* between his finger and thumb, and says, *Ecce Homo!* Behold the man! The man! Where are his limbs, his head, his eyes, his ears? What! a human body—a real material substance invisible, intangible, and independent of space! Why, the very images of the heathen had something of verisimilitude in them, and did not shock common sense in this manner. Hear what David says concerning them:—"They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; they have ears, but they hear not; noses have they, but they smell not; they have hands, but they handle not; feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they with their throat." † The *Host* has nothing of all these; it is *sans* mouth, *sans* eyes, *sans* ears, *sans* nose, *sans* hands, *sans* feet—"sans every thing."

On this point a priest has replied to my arguments in the following terms:—"But neither the body nor the blood of Christ is God; they are mere created things; and what we

* This last clause is omitted in the translation used in Maynooth.

† Psalm cxv.

believe is, that the bread is changed into the body of Christ, not into his divinity, and that the wine is changed into his blood—that is, that the omnipotent God who made all things—body and blood of Jesus included—out of nothing—who converted water into wine—who daily converts the fruits of the earth into our body and blood, has, in the Eucharist, changed one created thing into another. The divinity of Jesus is certainly also present, but *it is not made by the priest*—it is not by virtue of the consecration, but by virtue of the union, which, in the incarnation, was instituted between the created body and blood and the uncreated divinity of Jesus.”

This explanation is hardly consistent with the definition of the Council of Trent, which teaches, that “in this sacrament are contained, not only the true body of Christ, and all the constituents of a true body, but also CHRIST, whole and entire; . . . the man-God; . . . the divinity and humanity, whole and entire.” “If after consecration, the body of Christ is really and truly present, under the species of bread and wine, not having been there before, it must have become so by change of place, by creation, or by transubstantiation. It cannot be rendered present by change of place, because it would then *cease to be in heaven*; for whatsoever is *moved* must then cease to occupy the place from which it is moved. Still less can we suppose it to be rendered present by creation—an idea which the mind instantly rejects. In order that the body of our Lord be present in the sacrament, it remains, therefore, that it be rendered present by transubstantiation; and, of course, that the substance of the bread entirely ceases to exist.” *

The infallible compilers quote a passage from St. Ambrose, as one “of those Fathers whose authority is too grave to be questioned,” putting the stupid question—“Shall it not require a less exercise of power (than creation) *to make that subsist*

* Catch. Council Trent, translated by the Rev. J. Donavan, Professor, &c., Royal College, Maynooth. R. Coyne, Dublin, p. 228.

which already has existence, and to change it into another thing ?”

But if the mind instantly rejects the idea of creation, why not instantly reject the idea of changing one substance into another ? or of accidents subsisting of themselves, inhering in no subject ? or of these independent accidents nourishing the human body ? or of the divisibility of Christ's body—each fragment being a whole Christ—making a part as great as the whole ? or of a true human body, a material substance existing without occupying space—“ not as in a place,” as if flesh, and blood, and bones were nothing but thin air, invisible, impalpable ? Why did not their reasoning about change of place and creation, lead them at once to the obvious and necessary conclusion, that a human body could not possibly subsist under the form of a bit of bread ? Why did they sacrifice reason, common sense, and even the axioms of Euclid, on the altar of Infallibility !

Well, the priest changes the bread and wine into the body, and blood, and soul of Christ—he produces the living body out of the dead substance—and the divinity is present by connexion and concomitancy ; it is the whole Christ that starts into being the moment the formula is uttered, “ *Hoc est corpus meum !*” Then Christ might exclaim to the man who held him in his fingers, as he did in heaven to his Father—“ A body hast *thou* prepared for me ; lo, I come to do thy will, O Priest !” There is a strange confusion of ideas among Roman Catholic Divines on this subject. Sometimes the transformation is the work of God ; sometimes it is the work of the priest personating Christ, clothed in his seamless garment, and offering himself up to the Father ; so that we have Christ in the person of the priest, in the hand of the priest, in the stomach of the priest !—Christ whole and entire on the tongue of every communicant—Christ multiplied into myriads throughout the world ; and yet there is but one Christ ! I have seen one priest comparing his presence in the Eucharist to the animal-

cule that floats invisible in a drop of water, though perfectly organised living beings, as if A MAN were an *animalcule*, and could not be detected without a microscope. I have never learned, however, that any thing like man has been discovered in the Host. I have heard another celebrated controversialist declare from the pulpit, that "five hundred thousand millions of Christs could stand on the point of a cambric needle!!" Well might the Fathers of Trent say, "It mocks the powers of conception; nor can we find any example of it in natural transmutations, nor even in the wide range of creation." *

This dogma then, as well as consubstantiation, denies "the truth of our Lord's body," as the Church of England expresses it. The *Man* Christ Jesus could not be present without being seen and felt, unless some miraculous power were put forth to deprive the spectators of their senses.

That is the point! The *senses* are delusive, we cannot depend upon their testimony! If not, what can we depend on? The testimony of the church? But we must *hear* the church; and how can we hear without ears? I am at a loss to know why we should trust our ears, and doubt our touch, and smell, and taste, and sight! There is surely none of the senses more subject to mistakes than hearing, as proved by the tricks of ventriloquists. Our sight, indeed, may in some instances deceive us for a moment; but the aid of the other senses, and a little experience, will soon correct the false impressions. Things are sometimes seen through a medium which refracts the rays of light, as in the case of a rod which seems crooked in water. But there is nothing in the Host to refract the sunbeams; nor does it change colour like the chameleon, according to the light that shines on it. Nor is it that it has appeared bread to a few, while to the rest of the world it is a man. There never was a *sane* person to whom it seemed any thing but simple bread—to eye, palate, or hand. If we cannot believe these, neither can we believe our ears; so that we can

* Catechism, Trent, p. 231.

have no possible means of knowing whether the church teaches the doctrine, or whether there be a church at all ! And even if we could depend on our hearing, why should we receive the evidence of this solitary sense against the unanimous testimony of its *four* fellows—questioned, too, about subjects which they are competent to examine, while the ear knows no more about them than the tongue does about music ?

In fact, if we believe transubstantiation, we can believe *nothing else*. To build it, we must break up the foundation of all faith, and pull down the pillars of all truth. It must rest on the ruins of religion, natural and revealed ; and stand alone in the universe of space, surrounded by the dark void of Atheism ! The basis of all religion—the being of a God, is demonstrated from the works of creation, revealing, as they do, the power, wisdom, goodness, and self-existence of the eternal Creator. But we can learn nothing of these except through the senses, which are the inlets of our knowledge. A soul in a senseless body is shut up in a dungeon, whose gloom must last till it is thrown open by death. Reason has no materials for reflection till they are furnished by her handmaids, the senses. The dogma of transubstantiation, therefore, leads by a *single step* to the pyrronism of Hume, and would precipitate the church into the abyss of Atheism !

Revelation itself comes through the medium of the senses ; for if they are deceptive—if we cannot safely trust them, CHRISTIANITY *may* be nothing but a fable, and *cannot possibly be shown to be true*. The divine mission of Jesus was proved by his miracles, which were all confident appeals to the senses. *He* never demanded faith without furnishing evidence. He built nothing on credulity. Truth scorns implicit, unreasoning submission. “The works that I do,” says Christ, “they bear witness of me. Believe me for the very work’s sake.” How could they, if they did not rely on their senses in examining these works ? The raising of Lazarus, the multiplying of the loaves and fishes, and all the stupendous miracles which the

Saviour and his disciples performed, might have been nothing but illusions of the mind—the mere phantoms of a troubled imagination. Had the Jews known any thing of the scholastic divinity, they would undoubtedly have come to this conclusion. It is well, therefore, that so dangerous a dogma as transubstantiation was unknown when the Gospel was first preached. Neither the Incarnation, the Death, nor the Resurrection of CHRIST, could have been proved to Catholic logicians!

Take the last mentioned fact, which is the key-stone of Christianity. If Christ be not risen, all his sufferings went for nothing, and all his claims were unfounded. “Then,” says Paul, “is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain; yea, and we are found false witnesses for God.”* Now, what evidence had these witnesses to give? The very evidence, and no other, which Catholic divines tell us we must reject when we look upon the Host! “He was *seen* of Cephas, then of the twelve; after that he was *seen* of five hundred brethren at once. After that he was *seen* of James, then of all the Apostles. And, last of all, he was *seen* of me also, as of one born out of due time.”† The narrative of these appearances will be found at the close of John’s Gospel, and in the beginning of Acts, where it is said, “He *showed* himself alive, after his passion, by many *infallible proofs*, being SEEN of them forty days”‡

Hence, if the Resurrection be true, transubstantiation *must* be false. The proofs which *sustain* the one *overthrow* the other. They cannot both stand together. The antagonism between them is deadly. According to the Church of Rome, the proofs of the Resurrection are so far from being infallible, that they have deceived all mankind for eighteen hundred years, in regard to the presence of Christ on the altar. Nothing, therefore, can be more fallible, not even the reveries of lunacy; for it is rarely that some sense does not remain faithful to its trust,

* 1 Cor. xv. 14, 15.

† 1 Cor. xv. 5, 6, 7.

‡ Acts i. 3.

even in madness; as one who fancied that the asylum was his palace, and the inmates his attendants, had, after all, the mournful conviction, that all the delicacies laid on his royal table had the taste of porridge. Hence, if Protestants are wrong in rejecting transubstantiation, Apostles were wrong in believing the resurrection. If their proofs are infallible *for* the main pillar of Christianity, our proofs are equally infallible *against* the main pillar of Romanism!

The Apostle Thomas was not present when Jesus first appeared among the disciples after his resurrection; and he declared, that unless he saw and felt his body, with its wounds, he would not believe. Now, suppose they set about convincing him in the Catholic fashion, holding up a piece of the consecrated bread, falling down to worship it, and commanding him to do so, or be “accursed”—declaring that this bread was the risen Saviour, his very body and blood, soul and divinity! Suppose again, that they had broken the bread in a hundred fragments, and insisted that each of *these* was the Messiah, the Son of the living God—that Thomas’s sight, taste, smell, and touch were cheats, and that his business was not to question, but adore!—would he not have stared with amazement, and said—“Brethren, I perceive of a truth, ye are all gone mad!”

No, no; his Divine Master soon gave him a different kind of evidence of his identity, pronouncing a blessing on those who had *not seen*, and yet believed, on the testimony of those who *had seen*, and were competent witnesses, intelligent and honest. The fault of Thomas lay, not in refusing to believe where there was *no proof*—that were no fault at all, but a *duty*—it consisted in refusing to credit the *testimony* of his brethren. He was not blamed for trusting the senses, but because he would not trust any body’s senses but *his own*; which is the fallacy on which Hume builds his argument against miracles. None but a fool determines to believe nothing but what he can see and feel *himself*. We may observe, in passing,

what great stress the Apostles, in after years, laid on the fact, that Jesus was seen and identified after his resurrection. Does not this furnish the most satisfactory evidence that they were no believers in transubstantiation? If they were, they could produce a whole Christ at any time, and see and handle the word of life. Should any one doubt the resurrection, they could at once exhibit a *consecrated wafer*, exclaiming, “Ecce Homo!” What a capital plan this would have been for Paul to convince the philosophers of Athens!

Hence, it is manifest, that had the Bible come to us loaded with this tenet, we could not have received it as the production of Him who made us what we are—rational creatures. Before we embraced him as a Redeemer, we should have denied him as a Creator. We must have turned Atheistic, in order to become Christian; and reason must have been extinguished before faith could be kindled in our hearts. Hence, often in the Roman Calendar, the greater the idiot, the holier the saint.

I cannot imagine that there are many Roman Catholics who have *thought* about this doctrine, and yet have a realising faith in it. I allow much to the force of prejudice, and the powerful influence of early impressions and habits; but I cannot think that in this age of inquiry, of popular philosophy, of national education, of general intelligence, of Sunday-school instruction, and, above all, of Biblical knowledge—I cannot think, that in this enlightened age, the clouds of mystery that surround and sanctify the Host, will long withstand the light of reason and truth. I have said, that if this tenet were a doctrine of the Bible, it would destroy the credibility of the Gospel. But, thank God, it cannot be found there; nor the least shadow of foundation for it; notwithstanding the violence done by its supporters to every sound principle of interpretation.

SECTION II.—THE PHILOLOGICAL ARGUMENT.

WE hear it continually stated by Roman Catholics, and often admitted by Protestants, that the words, "This is my body," literally understood, teach the doctrine of transubstantiation: hence, the latter labour to give them a figurative or spiritual interpretation. I was myself a long time under the influence of this impression—nor was it removed till I ceased to follow men, and began to examine the word of God critically and independently. I am now prepared to demonstrate, that the use of the verb *to be*, never does imply, and never can imply, *transubstantiation*. The reverse has been asserted ten thousand times, but never proved in a single instance. I have thrown down the glove often, but no one has taken it up. I shall give the profits of this work, "be the same more or less," to any man who will produce a sentence from the Bible, or any other book, in which the verb *to be*, in any of its forms, indicates a change of one substance into another. I not only deny that transubstantiation is the plain, obvious, and natural meaning of the words of institution, but I maintain, that by no possible torturing can such a meaning be wrung out of them!

This meaning, as we have seen, is repugnant to reason—wars against common sense—outrages the senses—nullifies all testimony—subverts the pillars of natural and revealed religion—extinguishes all intellectual light—and converts the moral world into a chaos. Surely such consequences ought to make any sane man recoil from such an interpretation! Surely the individual that has the hardihood to embrace it, must be compelled to do so by such an array of Scripture proofs, by so many parallel passages, and by such grammatical, rhetorical, and logical necessity, that he must either hold to the dogma or reject the Bible! Nothing of the kind! As there is nothing like the doctrine in the universe, so there is nothing like the interpretation in the Bible—nor any where else. Now, let the reader remember well the conditions of this argument. I have

shown that the nature of things—every rational consideration that could weigh with overwhelming force against such a meaning—renders the Catholic interpretation highly improbable, if not utterly impossible; and I am now to demonstrate, that in recklessly fixing that interpretation on the passage, every law of human language is violated—that nothing so *arbitrary* ever proceeded from the most capricious autocrat! It is clear, that the Catholic advocate should prove that the words of the institution are susceptible of *no other* meaning, before he fathers upon them a dogma which “shocks all common sense.” Even if he *could* find sentences in the Bible similarly constructed, where the verb *to be* stands between two distinct substances, and imports the change of one of them into the other—*i. e.* if, instead of denoting *identity* or *representation*, it actually denoted *transubstantiation*; still, for the irresistible reasons which I have submitted to the reader, we should demur to the application of this meaning to the words of institution.

Let us then consider a few out of the numerous passages where the substantive verb is in a similar predicament—passages strictly parallel in grammatical construction:—“The three branches *are* three days.”—“The three baskets *are* three days.”—“The seven good kine *are* seven years.”—“The fourth beast *shall be* the fourth kingdom.”—“The rough goat *is* the King of Grecia, and the great horn that is between his eyes *is* the first King.” Here we should have branches and baskets *changed into* days—cattle into years—a beast into a kingdom—a goat and a horn into a king. “Thou *art* a rock” (or a stone.)—“That rock was Christ.” By this expression the Apostle must have been *petrified*, transubstantiated into a stone; and a *rock* must have been changed into the body and blood, soul and divinity, of the Messiah. “These *are* the two covenants.”—“For this Hagar *is* Mount Sinai.” Was the woman transubstantiated into a mountain? “The seven heads *are* seven mountains.”—“The ten horns *are* ten kings.”—“The waters . . . *are* peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and

tongues.”—“ And the woman which thou sawest *is* that great city.”—“ The seven stars *are* the angels,” &c.—“ The seven candlesticks *are* the seven churches,” &c. *

If there be any thing in the form of words to teach transubstantiation, these passages must all teach it; and yet no one ever thought of ascribing such a meaning to any of them. And I repeat, there cannot be found an instance in the Bible, or any other book, where such a phrase will bear such a construction!

The learned and impartial Dr. Bloomfield, in his Greek Testament, writing on the disputed passage, says:—“ *All the best commentators are agreed that the sense of εστι (is) is represents or signifies; an idiom common in the Hebrew, which, wanting a more distinctive term, made use of the verb substantive; a simple form of speech, yet subsisting in most languages. Thus the Jews answered their children, who asked concerning the passover, what is it? “ This is the body of the Lamb which our fathers eat in Egypt.” How could the Jewish disciples of our Lord, familiar as they were with such a question, and such an answer, mistake for a moment the meaning of our Lord, at the paschal feast too, as if he were converting the bread into his body—then holding his own body in his hand—then eating himself!—and then giving himself to be literally eaten by his disciples; and that, mind, not in his glorified or spiritualised state, for he had not yet died, but living and speaking before them! O credulity! O priestcraft!*”

Agreeable to this observation of Dr. B. is the remark of the eminent critic Wetstein:—“ Whilst Christ was distributing the bread and wine, the thought could not but arise in the minds of the disciples, what can this mean, and what does it denote? They did not inquire whether the bread which they saw were *really bread*, or whether another body lay hid in the interstices of the bread, but *what this action signified*—of what it was

* Gen. xl. 12—18; lxi. 26. Dan. vii. 23; viii. 21. Matt. xvi. 18. 1 Cor. x. 4. Gal. iv. 24, 25. Rev. i. 2; xvii. 9, 12, 15, 18.

a representation or memorial." These are facts with which every Biblical scholar is familiar, and yet such writers as Dr. Wiseman, and their servile copyists, venture to speak of this *customary, idiomatic, plain, and simple form of speech* in such terms as the following:—"Strange and ambiguous language—harsh, unintelligible, and hitherto unheard-of figures of speech; language such as was never heard in the world; unnatural language; Jesus delivered himself in enigmas. If these words are to be interpreted literally, adieu to Christianity! for *Jesus Christ himself* led nine-tenths of the Christian world into idolatry!" It is by stuff like this that able men try to answer the arguments brought by Protestants against the doctrine of transubstantiation.

Before I proceed farther, I must stop a moment to answer a criticism about the demonstrative pronoun *τοῦτο*. It is said, that it cannot refer to *ἄρτος* (bread,) because the latter is masculine, while the pronoun is neuter. Then what can it refer to? Not to *σῶμα* ("body,") for it was not his body till after the formula was pronounced; it was in virtue of the words that the bread was changed, as we are taught by the believers in the doctrine. He could not say, "This body is my body." To get out of this difficulty, it is alleged, that the pronoun *this*, though a *demonstrative*, is used indeterminately, and means nothing at all "*at first*." Thus, to quote literally from a Catholic critic—"thus, if a person were to say, this is a topaz, instructing a person who knew not what it was, this, *at first*, means no particular thing!" What does the reader think of that? I venture to assert against this high authority, that the demonstrative "this" means, not something "indeterminate, or a thing in general," but a particular thing which it distinctly points out. The word *τοῦτο*, then, refers evidently to *σημεῖον*—a *sign, symbol, token, or memorial*, as every grammarian knows. For we believe that our Lord used no empty figure, no unmeaning metaphor, but in the night in which he was betrayed established a sacred, *symbolical institution*—a repre-

sentative ordinance, for a perpetual memorial of his death. We are asked, however, the following question:—Suppose that our Lord really wished to teach the doctrine of transubstantiation, how could he more plainly express it than by saying, “This is my body?” What terms could give his meaning more distinctly? This question demands a fair and explicit answer. I have proved that the verb *to be* cannot denote transubstantiation. If then the *thing* be possible, or was ever done, there must be some word or words to express it. Certainly; and we have most decisive cases at hand in the Bible—cases of transubstantiation, about which there can be no question. Now, if the verb *to be* be employed here, it will show that it might possibly have that meaning in relation to the Eucharist; but if we never find the substantive verb applied to any case of transubstantiation, what shall we say?

Let us look at this subject. God commanded Moses to cast down his *rod*, that it might be changed into a serpent. Now, it is not said, “He cast it on the ground, and it *was* a serpent.” The meaning of this would be, either that it *had been* a serpent before, or that it was designed to represent a serpent. The language is, “And he cast it on the ground, and it *BECAME* a serpent.” It is the word (*Hayah*) used in reference to the creation of Adam, “Man *became* a living soul.” The corresponding Greek word (*γινωμαι*) is employed where Satan, tempting our Lord, says, “Command these stones that they *be made* bread.” These words really express the idea of transubstantiation. There is no mistaking their meaning. They denote a change of substance; and that is their obvious natural sense.

The change of the water into wine is often referred to, as explaining the doctrine of transubstantiation. Well, perhaps, we shall find the magical *est* here! No, indeed! “When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that *WAS MADE* wine, and knew not whence it was,” &c.

Now, if there were a single passage in the New Testament,

where the bread and wine are said to *become*, or to be *made*, or turned into, or changed into, the body and blood of Christ, there would be some show of Scripture for transubstantiation; but, strange as it may appear to one unacquainted with the perversity of polemical writers, THERE IS NOT ONE! In every case where the Lord's Supper is spoken of, it is the substantive verb *to be* that is used—a word, which, in places innumerable through the Bible, obviously and necessarily means *to signify* or *represent*, and where it connects *different substances*, cannot possibly have any other meaning; while in all those places where a real transubstantiation is spoken of, another word is employed, which means *to become*, *to be made*. Is not the conclusion irresistible? I think so.

But this is not the whole of the argument, nor the best of it. When we look at the real transubstantiations effected in the Bible, we find them as different, from what takes place on Catholic altars, as every peculiar work of God must be from the miserable imitations of man. A little mechanical contrivance might enable a priest to mimic the thunder so as to deceive children, perhaps; but he should let the work of transubstantiation alone, for even children cannot be imposed on in that till they are first taught to have no senses, and next to have no conscience. We shall turn again to the case of Moses' rod. * As soon as it was cast on the ground it became a serpent, and "*Moses fled before it!*" Afterwards he took it by the tail, and it became a rod in his hand again. Now here was a veritable change! When the rod was cast down it did not retain the properties, the appearance, shape, colour, &c. of a rod. Moses fled before it; he also took it by the tail, for it had a tail, and a head too. He knew nothing of the schoolmen's jargon about accidents, nor of the philosophy of the Council of Trent, that there might be colour, taste, smell, &c. in a substance to which they could not belong. All the "accidents" of the rod disappeared at once, while all the qualities

* Exodus iv. 2, &c.

of the new substance presented themselves, as the evidence of the change. How else could Moses have believed in it? If the rod had not become a serpent to the senses, then must he have taken the appearance of Jehovah for an illusion of his own mind. He would never, in that case, have gone into Egypt. Neither would he ever have persuaded Pharaoh to let the people go. When he performed the miracle in the king's presence, * the proofs of the change were at once manifest to all the spectators. Oh, how the magicians would have laughed Moses and Aaron to scorn, if they had proceeded according to the Catholic plan, and insisted that the rod was a serpent while it lay on the ground, lifeless, motionless, with all the accidents of a rod! Moses, if he had been a disciple of Thomas Aquinas or Peter Dens, might have lectured them learnedly about substances, essences, and accidents, and accused them of "horrid blasphemy," imprecating the curse of God upon their heads, because they could not for the life of them believe that rod was a serpent! But they would have laughed exultingly, exclaiming, "Moses, much learning hath made thee mad! You must allow us the use of our senses, man. We are not to be frightened with miracles like this. By the head of Osiris, a very harmless serpent, this of thine, friend Moses."

Now, if they would have been justified in rejecting pretensions founded on such an attempt at miracle-working as I have supposed, are not we justified in holding that what appears but a wafer, without having undergone the least sensible change by the words of consecration, is *not* the body and blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ? We *cannot* hold any thing else on the subject. But let the priests give us such evidence of their stupendous power, as Moses and Aaron did, and we will believe.

Or such as CHRIST gave. Is it reasonable for them to expect that we should take their own word for this power, when our blessed Saviour asked no belief without the most satisfac-

* Exod. vii.

tory proofs. Take the case of the wedding at Cana, where he changed the water into wine. Suppose for a moment, for argument sake, that there was no more change in the water than there is in the wine of the Eucharist. The ruler of the feast would taste it, and instead of saying the good wine was kept for the last, he might exclaim, "Why this is a mistake—You have brought me water instead of wine!" "No, sir, it is wine." "Wine! do you mean to mock me? Why it has not the taste of wine, nor the smell, nor the colour. Take it away. The waiter must be drunk." "Pardon me, sir, it is only our senses that deceive us! The accidents of water are there, it is true, but not the substance; *that* is thoroughly transubstantiated into the substance of wine. And, moreover, this is the first miracle performed by the Messiah, who stands in the midst of us."

I feel as if there were something irreverent in the bare supposition, that the blessed Jesus could, even in imagination, be placed for a moment in such a humiliating predicament. And yet such for centuries has been the predicament of the whole Roman priesthood, who boast that Christ has committed to them the power of changing bread into his body, while they have never furnished a particle of proof that they possess it, and never will to the end of time.

SECTION III.—THE ARGUMENT FROM THE 6TH OF JOHN AND OTHER SCRIPTURES.

I now beg the reader's particular attention to the 6th of John, a passage very much relied on by the defenders of transubstantiation. My conscience bears me witness that I am not about to handle the word of God deceitfully, but with an earnest desire to ascertain its meaning, and submit to its authority.

When the multitude had witnessed the glorious miracle of the loaves, they exclaimed,* "This is of a truth that prophet

* Verse 14.

that should come into the world ;” referring, unquestionably, to the prediction of Moses, which, they believed was about to be accomplished. Hence they proceeded “to take him by force and make him a king.” * They regarded him, indeed, as the promised Messiah; but they wholly mistook his character, deeming that his weapons were carnal and his kingdom of *this world*. Their own feelings were altogether worldly. For our Lord tells them, “ Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled.” †

The mention of the bread leads our Lord, as was his custom, to introduce the doctrine of his own atonement on the cross under this striking similitude; just as he had availed himself of the expressive comparison of water in speaking to the woman of Samaria. “ Labour not,” saith he, “ for the meat which perisheth, but labour for *that meat* which endureth to everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you.” Now what is the “ meat ” here spoken of? What can it be but the blessings of redemption; and how could it be eaten except by faith? “ For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven.” ‡ This could not be his literal flesh; for *that* did not come down from heaven. He goes on to say— “ He that *cometh* to me shall never HUNGER; and he that *believeth* on me shall never THIRST.” § Here the ideas of eating and drinking occur plainly to illustrate the *act of believing*; and with this exercise of the mind and heart, complete and eternal salvation is indissolubly connected.

Again—“ Verily, verily I say unto you, he that BELIEVETH on me *hath everlasting life*.” “ This is the bread that cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die.” || Now compare the 40th verse with the 54th. In the former it is asserted by Jesus to be the will of his Father, that “ he that seeth the Son and BELIEVETH on him, may have *everlasting*

* Verse 15.

† Verse 26.

‡ Verse 33.

§ Verses 35.

|| Verses 47, 50.

life ;” and that he will “raise him up at the last day.” In the latter, it is said, “Whoso *eateth my flesh*, and *drinketh my blood*, hath *eternal life* ; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Is it not as plain as any axiom in Euclid, that in these passages, eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ, are phrases which express the act of believing, having precisely the same meaning? Must they not mean one and the same thing, when exactly the same *effects* are ascribed to both—effects which only *one* cause could produce?—otherwise, would not our Lord contradict himself? He had said repeatedly, and most solemnly, he that *believeth* hath everlasting life ; and then he declares, with the same form of asseveration, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.”* Now, if this eating and drinking be a *different thing from believing*, here is an irreconcilable contradiction. According to the Catholic interpretation, the one solemn assertion flatly contradicts the other !

Besides, if you understand this last-quoted verse as referring to the *sacrament*, it absolutely excludes from salvation all those who lived before it was instituted, as well as all children and others who do not partake of it. According to this view, even *baptism* does not secure salvation without the Eucharist ! And more than this, every communicant, worthy or unworthy, must be eternally saved ! He abides in Christ, and Christ abides in him ; and he will be raised up at the last day. Even Luther, Calvin, Cranmer, and Knox, must all be crowned in glory, because they had been communicants at Catholic altars ; for this, according to the argument, is the sole and essential condition of salvation !

Observe, the Jews were as much offended when Jesus said he had come down from heaven, as when he said he would give them his flesh to eat. It is no wonder, indeed, that those who

* Verse 53.

wanted to force him on the throne of David, and hoped that he would break the Roman yoke, and raise their nation to independence and glory, should have their long-cherished prepossessions violently shocked, when he intimated to them, that, instead of reigning over *their* nation as an earthly monarch, he was to become A SACRIFICE for the WORLD. This was certainly a hard saying for a Jew; especially at that moment, when their hopes were excited to the highest pitch. "Doth this offend you?" He asked, "what, and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before?" What then will become of your low, earthly notions of Messiah's reign, when he will have left the world, and gone back to his Father's throne? Your notions of my kingdom are carnal. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, *the flesh profiteth nothing*: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." He had said before, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in *spirit and in truth*." And Paul said long after, "Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more:" that is, *after the flesh*. Also, when the mother of Jesus, and his near relations, came seeking him, he asked, "Who are my mother and my brethren?" And, looking around on the audience, he said, "Those who hear the word of God, and keep it, they are my mother and my brethren." It was quite natural that others should have been offended at the idea of his being *a spiritual* and *a suffering* Saviour, when Peter could not resist the same feelings. "And Peter took him and began to rebuke him; but when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men." *

It appears to me, that here lies the distinction between the "*spirit*" and the "*flesh*" in this chapter. The flesh does not mean here (though it often does elsewhere) carnal propensities,

* Mark viii. 32, 34.

or sensual dispositions, as Catholic writers assert. How infinitely absurd would it be to say, that *they* profit nothing! Who believes, or could believe, that they do? It is degrading the Saviour as a teacher to suppose that he refers to them. Neither, as I think, does the word flesh refer to our Lord's body, literally speaking, as if they seriously thought he meant to give it to them to be eaten in the ordinary way.

No; by the flesh he meant, a literal, tangible, formal, ceremonial system of religion, such as that to which the Jews were then attached, and that which Roman Catholics and Puseyites are now attached. Both abide by "the letter which killeth." The Catholic religion, like theirs, is material, local, earthly; and, in this sense, "carnal." Thus Paul denominates the Jewish system, as then administered, a code of "*carnal ordinances*" and "*bodily exercise, which profiteth little.*" Is not this parallel with the words, "The *flesh* profiteth nothing?" So also to the Galatians, who had resumed the "yoke of bondage"—that is, the ceremonial system of religion. "Are ye so foolish? having begun in *the spirit*, are ye made perfect by THE FLESH?"* That is, by the works of the law, as mentioned in the preceding verse. Thus, also, those who desired to make "a fair show *in the flesh*," constrained the converts to be circumcised, that they might glory in their *flesh*.† The contrast between the *flesh* and the *spirit*, in this sense of the term, is strongly marked by Paul in the following passage:—"For we are the circumcision who worship God IN THE SPIRIT, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence *in the flesh*. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh; . . . circumcised the eighth day,"‡ &c.

There is in all these passages (and there are many similar) a contrast expressed, or implied, between the *flesh*, as the representative of a system of *earthly ordinances*, and the *spirit*, as denoting the free, pure, expansive, philanthropic, heavenly

* Galatians iii. 3.

† Gal. vi. 12, 13. See also Rom. vii. 5, 6. ‡ Phil. iii. 4, 5, and Heb. ix. 10.

worship of the Gospel-kingdom. This is, I conceive, what our blessed Saviour had in his mind, when he said, "The flesh profiteth nothing." What a noble contrast! a universal and spiritual religion, opposed to a local and a ceremonial one, which loaded life with a yoke of forms, as unprofitable to the soul as they were painful to the body; and which Peter declares neither they nor their fathers were able to bear! Yet, this is essentially the very yoke which the Oxford Divines would impose on us now again, *after* the time of the Reformation!

Speaking of our Lord's giving his flesh, that is his body, Dr. Bloomfield says, "There is plainly a reference to the *sacrifice* of the death of Christ, and the atonement through his blood." That they understood him in this sense, and took offence because they so understood him, is to me quite clear. As Jews and Orientals they were familiar with the practice of illustrating the reception of doctrines by *eating* and *drinking*. Thus Solomon says, "Wisdom hath killed her beasts, she hath mingled her wine." Isaiah compares the word of God to water, to wine, to milk. I have already referred to our Saviour's employment of water as descriptive of the blessings of his redemption. Paul says to the Corinthians, I have fed you with *milk*, and not with *meat*. (It seems he did not give them the *Eucharist*, for that is meat—*flesh*-meat!) He uses the same figure again in addressing the Hebrews; and Peter also speaks of the "sincere milk of the word."*

Moreover, every reader of the Bible is aware, that when sacrifices were offered in the temple, certain portions were reserved for the priests. The *sanctum sanctorum* was so arranged as to represent the dwelling-place of God, and the priests feasted together as his family, when atonement had been made for their sins. The Pascal Lamb was one of the most striking types of Christ. In allusion to it, the Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the

* Prov. v. 2; Isa. lv. 1, 2; John iv. 10—15; 1 Cor. iii. 2; Heb. v. 10—12; 1 Peter, ii. 2.

sins of the world." Accordingly, Paul plainly declares,—“Christ our passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast,” &c. * Now, as the Pascal Lamb was *eaten*, so Christ taught them, that he, the lamb slain from the foundation of the world, should be offered up and eaten—that is, that the *souls* of men should be nourished by *faith* in this sacrifice, *appropriating it*, depending on it, living on it. How *natural*, then, was this transition to the eating of the flesh, from the previous discourse about food! How could they misunderstand the allusion? The fact is, they did not misunderstand it, whatever they might pretend. They knew well enough what he hinted at, and they carped at his words merely because they did not *like* their meaning. For this our Lord upbraids them thus:—“Why do you not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.” †

That they should have supposed him to refer to the eating of his body and drinking his blood, in the gross and material sense, is incredible; and still more so that he should have taught any such monstrous notion. The eating of human flesh was a thing unheard of among the Jews. In fact, the eating of any kind of *blood* was forbidden by their law. And for this very reason, Jesus could not have commanded the literal eating of his own blood. He who came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it—who declared that not one jot or tittle should pass unaccomplished, *He* could not possibly break the ancient law regarding blood. And that it actually remained in force after his death, is manifest from the decree in the 15th of Acts, where the violation of it is coupled with fornication. Nor was there an exception made in that decree, as in the Temperance pledges, in favour of SACRAMENTAL BLOOD. Sacramental *blood*! Such a thing never entered into the heart of a prophet or apostle to conceive.

It is a disputed point, says one of the most enlightened of Biblical critics, whether the eating, &c. refer to the *Eucharist*

* 1 Cor. v. 7.

† John viii. 43.

or not. He adds, "The *negative* has been adopted by many of the *most eminent* expositors. Of the ancient ones—by Tertullian, Clemens of Alexandria, Origen, Cyril, Chrysostom, and Augustine; and of the moderns, by Grotius, Whitby, Wolfe, Lampe, Titman, and Kuinoel; who show that the *context* will not permit us to take the words of the Eucharist." Christ means eating and drinking in a figurative and a spiritual manner, where the expressions signify APPLYING TO OURSELVES THE SACRIFICE OF HIS DEATH.*

Kuinoel says, that the "eating," &c. cannot refer to the Lord's Supper, because the words are "manifestly figurative;" and because, as the Lord's Supper was not then instituted, such a reference would have made matters still more obscure.

I do not lay stress on the authority of the *Fathers*; but I use it as an *argumentum ad hominem*, which, in this case, is irresistible, each priest being sworn to interpret only according to their "*unanimous consent*." Now, here the most eminent of them are *against* their votaries. For example:—

I. CLEMENS OF ALEXANDRIA.—"Eat my flesh and drink my blood,—he allegorically meant the drinking of faith and of the promises."—*Paedag. L. I. cap. 6*.

II. TERTULLIAN.—"Our Lord all along urged his intent by allegory, calling his word flesh, as being to be hungered after, that we might have life; to be devoured by the *ear*," &c.—*De Resur. Carn. cap. 36, 37*.

III. ORIGEN.—"We are said to drink his blood when we receive his words in which life consists. . . . If ye follow the letter, this very saying—except ye eat the flesh—is a killing letter."—Hom. xvi. in Num., and vii. in Levit.

IV. EUSEBIUS.—"His words and doctrines are flesh and blood." As if speaking in the person of Christ, he says,—
"Do not think I speak of that flesh with which I am compassed, as if ye must eat of *that*; neither imagine that I command you to drink of my sensible and bodily blood; but understand well,

* Bloomfield's Greek Testament in loc.

that the words I have spoken to you, they are spirit and life."
—De Eccles. Theolog. L. iii. c. 4.

V. AUGUSTINE.—“Why providest thou teeth and a stomach? Believe and thou hast eaten. . . This saying, except ye eat, &c., seems to command A WICKED THING; it is, *therefore*, A FIGURE, enjoining to communicate in the passion of our Lord.” “Understand the saying, says he, in a *spiritual sense*. Prepare not your *teeth*, but your *heart*.”—Tract, 35 et 26, in Johan. De Doctrina Christiana.

VI. JEROME.—“In the truest sense, the body and blood of Christ is the word and doctrine of Scripture: the flesh and blood of Christ are poured into *our ears*.”—Psl. cxlvii.

VII. CHRYSOSTOM.—“Our Lord spoke of faith in himself. His words are to be understood in a spiritual signification.”

VIII. THEOPHYLACT.—“Christians understand the expression spiritually, and are not devourers of flesh.”

In fine, “Albertin enumerates thirty Roman Pontiffs, Cardinals, Bishops, or Commentators, who interpret this part of St. John's Gospel in a spiritual sense, and reject the idea of its application to the Sacrament.” This list includes Innocent III. and Pius II.

An objection has been raised on the ground that our Lord did not explain his meaning fully, when so many murmured and walked no more with him. The answer to this will at once suggest itself to the reflecting reader. He was not accustomed to give explanations to such hearers—carping, caviling, cynical questioners, who were lying in wait to entrap him; proud, worldly, selfish, ill-natured persons, who followed him for the loaves and fishes, he was not in the habit of gratifying by a full exposition of the principles of his kingdom; because he knew it would be received in a captious spirit. In the very next chapter * they were really perplexed about his meaning,

* John vii. 34—36.

but he did not explain. Indeed, to *such* hearers he never did; for nothing could satisfy them. But to his *disciples*—that is, his genuine disciples—he was ever willing to give the fullest information, in order to correct their misunderstandings, according as they were able to bear it; for it should be recollected, that he did not deem it expedient *to disclose his plan of mercy all at once*, till time and events would render every thing plain.

Once more, if the literal principle of interpretation so strenuously contended for as the foundation of the whole system of expiation conducted by the priests of Rome, be a sound one, it ought to be carried out, and must necessarily be applied to other passages of a similar nature, especially when found in the *same* writer. It is ridiculous to fix an arbitrary meaning on one such, and expound all the others according to the ordinary laws of interpretation. Look, for instance, to a passage, virtually parallel, suggested to our Lord in a similar manner, at the well in Samaria:—"The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."* Understand this spiritually, and it is a beautiful representation of Divine influence in the heart. Understand it as Catholic Divines *must*, and what nonsense is made of it! Every believer has in his body a *literal well* of water, bubbling up to all eternity! Another passage of the same kind will show the absurdity of Roman criticism more strikingly still—"He that believeth in me, as the Scripture hath said, *out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water!*" Let these be literal rivers, and what does your literal principle conduct us to?—a literal *ocean* of absurdity.

A principal argument against the Protestant doctrine of the Eucharist is founded on a passage of Paul to the Corinthians.† It is said, that if the body of Christ be not present in the Sacrament, we cannot "discern" it, nor be guilty of it, in receiving unworthily. Besides, Protestants are accused of "paying

* John iv. 10—15.

† Eph. xi.

no respect" to the elements, lest they should be guilty of idolatry; and by some they are represented as holding, that "the respect or insult" offered to such things cannot at all be referred to the objects they symbolise. Those who make this charge must be strangely ignorant of the views of Protestants on this subject. We do not, indeed, venerate relics or worship images, because the first is the act of a besotted mind, and the latter is forbidden by God, as expressly as theft, blasphemy, or any other crime. But to say, that insult offered to the consecrated bread and wine is denied by us to have any reference to Christ, is shocking. We believe that our Lord appointed the eating of bread and the drinking of wine as a *religious ordinance* in the church—as an expressive representation and lively memorial of his death, and of the redeeming love which it manifested; and because of this appointment, connexion, and sacred significance, we regard any slight offered to these emblems as an act of sacrilegious impiety. Dr. Wiseman's comparison (as old as the coins of Constantine) of defacing the royal image from money, is no more to the point than would be the melting of a crucifix. He might deface sovereigns by the score, if he could be so foolish, and the law would not touch him, unless he converted them into base coin. Constantine was wiser than his courtiers, when he felt no insult from having dirt thrown on his statues. But would it be no insult to Mary to have her image torn down from the altar, and trampled under foot? If the Sovereign of the Roman world had sent his *seal*, the symbol of his imperial authority, and it were trampled in the dust, would he not have resented that insult? That would certainly not be doing violence to his person; but it would be spurning his authority.

The Lord's Supper presents to us a most affecting emblem of the death of Christ—of the blood that sealed our redemption; and he that despises it, despises the atonement, and counts the blood of the covenant an unholy, or common thing. He "crucifies the Son of God afresh, and puts him to an open

shame"—not literally, surely, for Christ can suffer no more ; but his conduct shows that he would do it if he could. It is said, that the unworthy communicant offers "personal violence" to the Son of God. *Personal violence !* Is that possible ! Can the glorified body of Jesus be bruised, mangled, mal-treated, by every wretch that may find access to the rails of the altar ? Is the body of the Saviour crushed in the stomach, like a lamb swallowed *whole and entire* by a wild beast ? But, according to Catholic interpretation, worse remains, if worse can be ! He that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks "condemnation : " that is, the body, and soul, and divinity of the Saviour actually go down the throat of the wicked as into an open sepulchre ! and this entrance of the blessed Redeemer into the body brings with it—what ? Not life, peace, joy, but CONDEMNATION !! He that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks CHRIST with "personal violence ;" and in eating and drinking the Saviour, eats and drinks his own condemnation. Oh ! this is miserable theology. Those who believe that JESUS can enter a man only to damn his soul, would do well to ponder what Augustine has said upon the subject.

"The sacrament (or symbol) of this thing is prepared on the Lord's table, and is received from the Lord's table, by some unto life, by some unto destruction ; but THE THING ITSELF, whereof it is a sacrament, is received by *every man to life*, and by *no man to destruction*, whosoever shall be partakers of it." *

Augustine refers to the 6th of John to illustrate this statement ; and it is really surprising that sagacious men in the Church of Rome, such as Dr. Wiseman, should expound the 11th of 1st Cor. in this gross manner, without remembering the contradictory statements in the 6th of John—"He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, *hath everlasting life*, and I will raise him up at the last day." That is not very like *condemnation*. "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood ABIDETH IN ME and I IN HIM. He that *eateth me* the

* De Civit. Dei. Lib. 21. c. 25.

same SHALL LIVE by me. He that eateth this bread shall *live for ever.*"* If, then, to eat the *Host*, be to eat Christ, every eater of the host must have eternal life; he lives in Christ and Christ lives in him, shall be raised up at the last day and live for ever. How then can *any one* be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, and eat and drink his own damnation? The unworthy, that is the impenitent and unbelieving, do not, in fact, receive Christ at all—they *reject Him*!

But enough of this. I leave it to the Roman Catholic reader himself to say, is it not clear from these passages that the things received by unworthy communicants, and which they eat and drink to their own destruction, are not the body and blood of Christ; but the divinely appointed MEMORIALS of them, namely, the consecrated bread and wine? They are guilty of (that is, *with respect to*) the body of Christ, guilty in profaning the symbols of it. They do not "*discern*" it; that is, they do not *distinguish*, or discriminate between the Eucharist and a common meal, nor look by faith through the symbol to the thing signified,—thus spiritually to feed on the bread of the *soul*. The Corinthians brought their provisions with them to the meeting, according to the Greek custom, where they clannishly enjoyed themselves, disregarding the feelings of the poorer brethren; and, as Paul says, despising the congregation of God. After this "love-feast," they had the Lord's supper; but the same unchristian spirit was carried into this; they did not distinguish this sacred feast, this solemn commemoration of an awful sacrifice, from an ordinary entertainment, nor even from the licentious festivities in the heathen temple, which they frequented and partially imitated, and for which Paul sharply rebukes them in the preceding chapter.

But how could such things occur had mass been said at Corinth? And if they did not get the *cup*, how could they *drink* to excess, as they confessedly did? And if the cup contained not wine, but the Lord's *blood*, how could *that* intox-

* John vi. 54, 56, 57, 58.

icate them? How could they satisfy their hunger on the Host? Was there ever such a scene of feasting around a Catholic altar? Why did not Paul suspend the *priest* that said this strange mass, for these amazing irregularities? How comes it to pass that these Corinthians were exhorted to eat and drink at home, and *before* they went to communion actually feasted, while Roman Catholics are compelled to go to it *fasting*? But I need not multiply these questions, when the true answer to any one of them would prove that there was nothing like the mass in the primitive churches.

Our excellent translators have often been accused of flagrant corruption, because they have put an “*and*” for an “*or*,” in the 27th verse of the 11th of 1st Corinthians; for the purpose, it is alleged, of supplying an argument that the laity should get the cup. This would be a heavy charge if it were true, and a very serious blot in our English Bible. Now, listen to the defence:—

1. It was not necessary to corrupt this, or any other passage, to refute the Roman novelty of communion in one kind; because this same passage, as well as every other relating to the Lord's Supper, proves that, if we are bound to observe it at all, we are bound to give the wine as well as the bread. Deny the one, and there is not the shadow of authority for giving the other. For example—“This do as often as ye *drink it*, in remembrance of me; for as oft as ye eat this bread *and drink* this cup.” . . . “Let him eat of this bread *and drink* of this cup.” . . . “He that eateth *and drinketh* unworthily,” &c. This last phrase occurs in the 29th verse. Thus no less than four times in one passage is the wine spoken of as an *essential part* of the ordinance—as a symbol so expressive of his death, of the spilling of his blood, that it cannot be shown forth in this institution without it. What necessity then was there to impose on the vulgar, and sustain a bad cause in this case?

2. The translators do not render the conjunction *η*, as they

have done without good authority. They had the authority of the Alexandrian, Cambridge, and two later M.SS., which read *kai*, “*and*,” instead of *η*, “*or*.” This reading is supported by the Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic, and Coptic versions—authorities quite as good as the Vulgate.* Have these four most ancient versions flagrantly corrupted the text, and flatly contradicted its meaning, to impose on the vulgar and maintain a bad cause?

3. According to Dr. Bloomfield, the best commentators are agreed that *η* is put for *kai* in this passage.

4. It has the force of the conjunctive in the several passages referred to below.† The questions in the last—“What authority hast thou? *or*, who gave thee this authority?” are coupled in the parallel place (Matt. 21—23) by “*and* ;” and the meaning of the words renders this construction necessary.

5. It is boldly asserted, that there is no authority for this translation of *η* by “*and*” in any author sacred or profane. I had not to search long before I found an example in the immaculate Rhemish Testament:—“For we write no other things to you than what ye have read *and* (*η*) know.”‡ So much for the ignorant attack on the authorised version.

How utterly destitute then of Scriptural support is the practise of withholding from the people the symbol of the Redeemer’s blood, concerning which he expressly said, “*DRINK YE ALL OF THIS!*” Why do they make void the law of Christ by their traditions? Why are they suffered? Why disregard the dying words of the blessed Saviour, and rob the people of this “cup of blessing?” Is not the Church of Rome pre-eminently, emphatically “guilty of the body and blood of the Lord?”

* See Wetstein and Griesbach.

† Rom. iii. 1 ; iv. 13. 2 Cor. i. 13. Eph. v. 3 ; Luke xx. 2.

‡ 2 Cor. i. 13.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE MASS OR EUCHARISTIC SACRIFICE.

I RESPECT conscience in every man, however it may be misdirected. I have ever been the strenuous advocate of its freedom, which is violated no less by the overbearing, brow-beating controversial bully, than by the bloated tyrant who would drag his victim to the stake. This spirit I have ever detested, and wherever I meet the monster, I shall not fail to brand him with his proper mark, and call him by his proper name—*Persecution*. The inquisition is out of date. It will not work in these times ; neither will noise pass for reason ; and strength of lungs is felt to be a miserable substitute for strength of argument. There is another form, however, in which the Church of Rome continues to oppress conscience, which is neither very amiable nor very reputable—I mean, by cursing all Protestants. Of late, indeed, she has got a coaxing way of addressing them, and calls them her “dear dissenting *brethren*.” She dooms them to perdition ; but then she does it softly—like good old Isaak Walton impaling the worm on his hook, “handling it tenderly, as if he had a kindness for it.”

Hear the Church!—“If any man say, that in the Mass there is not a true and proper sacrifice offered unto God ; or that to be offered, is nothing else but for Christ to be given us to

eat—let him be *accursed!*” * Now, why should he be cursed for honestly differing in opinion with her? What right has she to curse fifty millions of Christians, including the Miltons, Newtons, Howards, Washingtons, and Wilberforces, of the earth? myriads of illustrious sages, whose piety was no less conspicuous than their genius and philanthropy? It is natural enough, however, for ignorance to curse knowledge, for tyranny to curse freedom, for bigotry to curse charity. Stand forward, frowning bigot, and answer for yourself! You find us guilty of a *creed* not coloured like your own; and having power, as you suppose, to enforce the *wrong*, for such a worthy cause, doom and devote us to the devil for all eternity! Most charitable, most sweet Christian! we thank you for bestowing on us such benign and gracious notice! But why reserve your *anathemas* for *opinion*, and your *indulgences* for *crime*? Why does your throat belch hell-fire, like Hecla, against heresy, while you roll immorality as a sweet morsel under your tongue? Oh, it is well that the *keys* with which you would exclude us from our God, do not fit the gate of heaven; and—(a word in your ear!)—if you are caught attempting to use them in that quarter, one of the sentinel angels may possibly take you up as a thief!

Bidding good bye to the bigot, I return now to my *gentle reader*, and my argument. It is declared, that in the Mass “there is a *true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice* for the living and the dead.” † If this be true, those who reject it are in danger of perishing; but if it be not true—if there be no atoning sacrifice in the Mass, then Roman Catholics are leaning on a broken reed—they are trusting in a nonentity—flying to a false refuge, fancying that there is in a set of empty forms a virtue, which will not only pardon and bless them here, but redeem them from the fires of purgatory. Surely this is no light matter! The question before us now is one of the

* Con. Trident. Sess. 22. De Sac. Missæ.

† Creed of Pius IV., Art. 15.

greatest importance ; let us then treat it with becoming seriousness.

With a spirit humbled and awed by the solemnity of the scene, let us now enter the sanctuary, and behold the priest, in the discharge of his sacred functions, that we may learn the nature of a propitiatory sacrifice. Sacrifices have been called bloody and unbloody, expiatory and eucharistic—the former designed, generally, as an atonement for sin—the latter, as an expression of gratitude to God. That a portion of the fruits of the earth should in some way be devoted to God as a thank-offering for the bounties of His providence, is not unnatural. But it seems quite unaccountable that man's reason or feeling could suggest to him that his Creator would be pleased with the destruction of animal life, and that he would take it as a compensation for the guilt of the soul. Hence, we might infer the probability that Jehovah appointed this mode of serving him, in order to answer some wise purpose. What reason might thus have darkly hinted, Revelation has clearly and explicitly taught us. As soon as sin entered our world, the Saviour was announced as the Seed of the woman who should bruise the serpent's head ; but not without suffering, for the serpent was to "bruise his heel." Abel, to whom death was strange and dreadful, would never have slain the harmless firstlings of his flock, unless God had appointed him to do it. He offered his sacrifice "in faith ;" and this faith must have referred to the promised Saviour, of whom the devoted animal was a type. Noah, Abraham, Melchisedek, and all the patriarchal priests of God, continued the practise. It was, indeed, the principal part of their worship. The *Altar*, carefully built, was the memorial of their piety in every land. The animal sacrifices offered in the Temple were very numerous ; and all the laws made concerning them, marked them out as typical of a perfect victim. They were required to be all the best of their kind, in health, in the flower of life, and altogether unmaimed ; and yet we are assured that they were but *shadows*,

and *not the very image* of what they did signify. The Law of Moses was a sort of *camera obscura*, in which the reflected forms of future blessings flitted before the mind of the ancient church. Through this medium Abraham saw the day of Christ afar off and rejoiced; the day which kings and prophets waited for, but died before it dawned upon the gladdened world. At length the Sun of Righteousness arose—the Saviour promised long appeared—his forerunner and herald pointed to Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, and said, “Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.” He came then as a lamb to be slain—as a victim to be offered up for our offences—to shed his precious blood for our salvation. This great event had been predicted by a long line of prophets—shadowed forth through the types and forms of the church for thousands of years—a nation had been hedged in from the world—a peculiar people had been formed—a magnificent temple had been built—a numerous priesthood established—a splendid ritual appointed—all to prepare for the tremendous sacrifice of the cross. For this, empires had risen and fallen; and for this, the sin-burdened creation was groaning and travailing. The incarnation of the Eternal Word—the sacrifice of the Son of God—this was the great antitype, accomplishment, and realisation of all the symbolical economy of Judaism. Like the sun in the noon of its glory, serene and cloudless, it has eclipsed all the host of precursory stars which foretold its coming. It was THE GREAT EVENT of our world, the crisis of its history, to which preceding ages looked forward with anxious interest, and succeeding generations look back with gratitude, and love, and rapture! The deluge may be *repeated*—successive conflagrations may consume our earth to a cinder, but the Son of God could be sacrificed but once. For, “as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this, the judgment;—so Christ was ONCE OFFERED to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for him, he shall appear the second time without sin, unto salvation.*

* Heb. ix. 27, 28.

We are told that into the mystery of his humiliation even angels desired to look, for his own Apostles were to dull and slow of heart to apprehend it, or to understand the character and condition of their Master. With what interest must those angels have watched the progress of this holy Exile, whom they had been wont to adore in Heaven, from the morning when they sang a hymn over his birth in Bethlehem, until that awful hour of suffering which ushered in his final agony, when one of them came down to strengthen him in the Garden of Gethsemane ! The long looked-for hour was now come—that hour which had been pondered in his heart for years—the thought of which had made him “a man of sorrows,”—which had shaded his countenance and dimmed his eye with grief, to which he frequently alluded in converse with those who little knew the depth of meaning which his words conveyed. Oh, those were awful vigils, when even Peter could not watch with his Master one hour ! Into that hour were crowded the pangs of eternity. Then being in an agony he sweat as it were great drops of blood ; then he prayed, willing as was his spirit, that if possible the bitter cup might pass away, so that he might not drink it ; but “ No, Father ! ” said he, repressing the emotions of humanity, in this the most fearful trial that ever rent a human heart—“ Not my will, but thine be done ! ” “ For this hour came I into the world ! ” The Victim is ready, the traitor is at hand ; the Prince of Peace is a prisoner—condemned to death by the judge that avouched his innocence. Denied by his own people—cast out of the temple of which he was the God—excommunicated by his own priests ! They instigated the multitude to cry, “ His blood be upon us and our children ! ” Infatuated priesthood ! awful imprecation !—Dreadfully was that demoniacal prayer answered, for the wrath of God came upon them to the uttermost. Jesus is stripped, arrayed in mock-majesty—derided—smitten on the face—ignominiously scourged—*crucified* ! Behold the man on the hill of Calvary ! Two thieves are dying beside him.

Fiercely flash the eyes of the multitude upon him now ; they grin and gnash upon him with their teeth. If devils held their carnival around his cross, they could not have more horridly revelled in the dying groans, which the pressure of human punishment extorted from the Lamb of God.

But, lo ! a horror seizes their minds—their blasphemous jests and ribaldry are cut short—the sun suddenly hides his face from such a scene—a deep gloom overspreads the heavens—an earthquake shakes the rocky foundations of Jerusalem, and heaves Mount Calvary from its basis. The dead come forth from their graves, and in the midst of these awful signs from Heaven, a loud voice is heard from the expiring victim, saying “IT IS FINISHED !”

Then, as the priests offered the evening sacrifice, the veil of the temple was rent before their eyes, revealing the holy of holies—its divinity gone—its glory departed ! Their house was left unto them desolate : their work was done ! “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which were the figures of the true ; but into Heaven itself there to appear in the presence of God for us.”* Here is a truly tremendous sacrifice—a sacrifice worthy of divine justice, amply sufficient for a fallen world—a sacrifice offered “ONCE FOR ALL.” Such is the sacrifice ; but who is the *priest* ? What man, what angel is competent to enter into the sanctuary of Heaven—to approach the throne of justice, and sprinkle this priceless, this mysterious blood upon it ? There is but one being in the universe who is qualified to discharge this office—to stand between our race and its God : there is but one who is capable of being our Mediator, who can sympathise with our sufferings, without participating in our guilt ;—He is one with the Almighty King, and one with his subjects ; “making peace by the blood of his cross,” and so introducing us to our Father who is Heaven. Yes, “such an High Priest *became us*, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sin-

* Hebrews ix. 24.

ners, and made higher than the heavens;—who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did ONCE, when he offered up HIMSELF." *

Now, look at the Roman priesthood. Are *they* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners; made higher than the heavens; free from sin? No! Then they do not "become us"—they do not suit, they are not fit for the work. It belongs to Christ alone; and for man to attempt to touch this awful ark, is as presumptuous as to attempt to ascend the throne of God. Oh priest, remember the fate of Uzzah, and forbear! Now, in all candour and seriousness, I ask you to compare your Mass-Sacrifice with that which I have attempted faintly to describe, and to which no pen can do justice. What is the Mass? Analyse it; examine it. A number of prayers and forms, the exhibition of bread and wine to be adored! What do you offer? where is your victim? I see the words, *Ecce Homo*—"Behold the man;" but there is no man there, I hear no groans from the dying victim, I behold no blood streaming to atone for my sins. Some flour and water have been baked into a very thin cake in a pan having the impression of a lamb bound to the cross. It is cut with a scissors into circular pieces. It is then consecrated by pronouncing, *Hoc est corpus meum*; and then it is Christ! What a representation of the glorious Saviour! What a sacrifice! What a victim! Just think of it. Look at your altar—your mimic Tabernacle—the toilet which superstition has so studiously decked out—what a picture of Calvary! Were ever two scenes so unlike? Remember that CHRIST offered *Himself*! Does the *Host* offer *itself*? No; it is equally incapable of action and passion; it can do or suffer nothing. It has no *feeling*—no *life*. What then? when you say Mass, *you offer* up Christ; and in so doing, you act as his representative;—the *representative* of one who is present in your hands!

* Hebrew vii. 26, 27.

I cannot stop to show how the Mass has grown out of an extravagant and superstitious regard to the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, and how this, as the nucleus, has been clothed in Jewish and Pagan forms, until it gradually assumed its present shape. Men were left, in a great measure, to think as they pleased about the nature of Christ's presence in the sacrament for more than a thousand years. *Pascasius Radbertus*, who lived in the ninth century, was the first who wrote a book in defence of transubstantiation; and this doctrine was not imposed on the church by authority until the Council of Constance, which sat in 1213, when Innocent III. christened it with the name "Transubstantiation," till then unheard of. You know, reader, the history of *Berenger*, and how Gregory the Great remained his steady friend, and how he altered (on account of its shocking absurdity) the declaration made for Berenger to swear to, though it had been imposed by a Pope and Council under the most terrible threats; and you know also the story which Gregory told about his conference with the Blessed Virgin, and *her* advice on the subject. However, I will not dwell on these matters, but proceed with my arguments.

I feel, indeed, that I might stop here. I have brought forward not trite and technical points, but a great *moral argument*; one which appeals to the conscience and good sense of every Christian, as well as to the understanding. But I must view the question in other aspects, that there may be no room for cavil, and the triumph of my cause may be complete.

When we urge that no living being can be sacrificed without *suffering*, that the Lord Jesus cannot die any more, we are told that he does *not die* in the Mass—that it is an "unbloody sacrifice." That is certainly the fact; but so sure as it is unbloody, it is utterly inefficacious to the sinner. In this fact we have the confession, that it is not and cannot be propitiatory; for "WITHOUT SHEDDING OF BLOOD IS NO REMISSION." *

* Hebrews vi. 7.

This is an axiom laid down by the Apostle Paul, in the plainest, most positive, and most unqualified words that can be used. Do you doubt his word, and will you contradict *him*? The argument may be put thus:—

An unbloody sacrifice cannot procure remission of sin;

The Mass is an unbloody sacrifice:—

Therefore the Mass cannot procure remission of sin. Can any demonstration be clearer? You can deny neither the major nor the minor;—therefore, you *must* admit the conclusion.

Indeed, the *repetition* of the Sacrifice of Christ is impossible. On this point the Epistle to the Hebrews, which treats principally of our Lord's Priesthood, is most express. "Nor yet that he should offer himself *often*, . . . (for *then* must he often have suffered, since the foundation of the world;) but now *ONCE* in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. . . . So Christ was *ONCE* offered to bear the sins of many. . . . The offering of the body of Christ *ONCE* for all. . . . By *ONE* offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. . . . There is *NO MORE* offering for sin." Read the 9th and 10th chapters throughout. Can any thing be possibly more conclusive? Paul cannot distinguish between the offering of Christ and his suffering. If he can be *sacrificed* again, he must *die* again, for the one includes the other. Either there is no atoning, expiating sacrifice in the Mass, or Jesus is dragged down from his glorious throne daily by ten thousand priests, who bind him to the cross and pierce his heart; and "*they* crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame!"*

I forbear to enumerate all the absurd consequences which this doctrine of a true and proper propitiatory sacrifice in the Mass draws after it. What a superstruction without any foundation! "Do this in remembrance of me," says our Lord;

* Hebrews ix. 22.

and, forthwith, you conclude, that you do what he did when you say Mass ! Why, there is no more resemblance between what you do and what he did, than there is between a wafer and a man. He took up a portion of bread and a cup of wine, and in the most simple manner gave them to his disciples, and bid them to do that in remembrance of him ; and afterwards, when we find them doing this very thing repeatedly, it is still simply “breaking bread,” and drinking wine. Paul does not say the cup is the blood of Christ, but that it is the *communion* of the blood of Christ ; “and the bread which we eat,” says he, “is it not the communion of the body of Christ ?” “For *we* being many, *are* ONE BREAD.”* Here is a specimen of *your* transubstantiation. A number of men and women are converted into a piece of bread ; but it so happens that they have all the “accidents” of men and women remaining ; which plainly proves the language to be figurative. Now, observe, the Apostle calls the sacrament ‘Bread’ *after* the consecration ; for, he adds, “we are all partakers of that one bread.” Again, he says, (v. 21,) “Ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s table and of the table of devils.” Now, if to be partaker of the Lord’s table is to eat the Lord, it must follow, that to partake of the devil’s table is to eat the devil ! According to this principle of interpretation, I could prove that such apostates as Voltaire, whose watch-word was, *Ecrasez l’Infame !* have it in their power *literally* to crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to open shame, and to trample under foot the Son of God.”† But if the nature of things forbids this, it also forbids you to fabricate and multiply the Saviour of mankind under the form of a wafer.

Besides, you are not warranted at all in assuming the office of *sacrificing priest*. Christianity knows of no such office, except in the person of its Divine Author. This is not the age of hierarchies. There is no priesthood now but that of Christ, which is an exclusive, peculiar, and everlasting priesthood.

* 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

† Heb. vi. 6 ; x. 29.

The Greek word, (ιερευς,) a *sacrificing priest*, is *never* applied as a term of office to the Christian ministry. The Latin *sacerdos*, is a word of the same import, and it is *never*, even in the *Vulgate*, applied to any of the Christian ministers, *as such*. Once or twice, indeed, *all* believers are called kings and priests; but this no more confers the sacerdotal than the regal office—it is used figuratively. We have the qualifications and employments of Christian ministers pointed out,* but never do we find them “offering the sacrifice of the Mass.” The word Πρεσβυτερος occurs sixty-five times in the New Testament, and the Rhemish translators never have it “priest,” but I believe, six times;† and on these occasions, they seem to have been influenced by the same necessity as the Jesuits of Bourdeaux, who inserted in their French translation, (Acts xiii. 2.)—“They offered unto the Lord *the Sacrifice of the Mass*.”

I may just observe before I close, that as the Apostle Paul demonstrated the nullity of the Jewish sacrifices, as pertained to the soul, from their *continual repetition*, so I demonstrate the nullity of the Mass from the same reason. If it be a propitiatory sacrifice, why repeat it?

I will bring you now to an *experimentum crucis*:—A rich man departs this life with all the rites and blessings of the church, but being still charged with some venial sins, he goes to purgatory; and if his friends desire it, you will continue to say masses for his soul for ten years, once every week—that is, you will sacrifice the Son of God five hundred and twenty times, to save *one* soul from *venial* sin! Now, either the Mass is *not* a propitiatory sacrifice for the *dead*, or you offer this “*tremendous sacrifice*” five hundred and twenty times in ten years, for no purpose but an earthly one! Sir, don’t talk to me about trifling with sacred things after this.

* Eph. iv. 11, 12; 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2; Tit. i. 5—8.

† Acts xiv. 22; xv. 2. 1 Tim. v. 17—19. Tit. i. 5. James v. 18.

Thank God, we do not need that the atonement of the cross should be repeated. When Jesus died, the work of salvation was truly *finished*. Then he “obtained eternal redemption for us.” For “by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” Indeed you might as well talk of repeating the *creation of the world*, as repeating the sacrifice of Christ. It has been done, and it can neither be *undone* nor *done again*.*

The simplicity and spirituality of Apostolic Christianity furnish a most striking contrast to the meretricious ornaments and carnal pomp of that system of will-worship which has supplanted it among the nations of Europe.

“Oh! how unlike the complex works of man,
Heaven’s easy, artless, unencumbered plan!”

The loveliness of pure and undefiled religion “needs not the foreign aid of ornament.” Of all the forms of Christianity, none is so sublimely simple, or fraught with such interesting associations as the Lord’s Supper. In the night in which he was betrayed, JESUS, surrounded by his disciples in a private room, took bread and broke it; also wine, and poured it out; and having given thanks to his Father, gave them to his disciples, saying, “DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.” This was his memorial. Here he erected a monument to perpetuate his Name! There was no sounding of trumpets—no military rejoicings on this occasion. No master of eloquence pronounced an oration—no poet recited his ode of immortal praise—no royal declaration sanctioned the birth of this holy Institute; nor did the great and noble congregate to witness its establishment. To the philosopher, the poet, the historian, the statesman, nothing could appear more mean and insignificant than this last supper! If they deigned to consider it for a moment,

* Since writing this, the Author has read *The Book of the Priesthood*, by the Rev. T. Stratten, of Hull—a beautifully written work, which deserves to be reprinted and widely circulated.

they would regard it merely as the unmeaning act of a few illiterate enthusiasts—a mere bubble on the mighty stream of national events. Could they have dreamed that it was the emblem of a power that should *revolutionize* the world!—that after the lapse of nearly two thousand years of changes and of national disasters—of falling empires and rising commonwealths—of wars, convulsions, and desolations—of revolutions in science, in literature, in religion, in national manners, in commerce, in all sorts of opinions,—THIS ORDINANCE should be found existing still in primitive purity and simplicity, diffused over the earth, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same—flourishing even in a world unknown to ancient Rome—still fresh in its beauty, undimmed in its lustre, unmaimed in its power—borne on the billows of every sea, penetrating the gloom of every wilderness, and finding a lodgment in the heart of every savage tribe! Nor is it wrapt in the clouds of tradition, of uncertain origin, and doubtful aim. Children need not ask their parents, “What mean ye by this?” It is surrounded by the light of authentic history; and, like a luminous cross in the firmament, proclaims to all nations, and all ages, that JESUS DIED to redeem the world, and will come again to be its JUDGE! The memories of those who built the pyramids are perished—cities bearing imperial names are buried in ruins—monuments of brass and marble have yielded to the “cankering tooth of time,” and been faithless to their trust—“Decay’s effacing fingers” have obliterated the features of ancient greatness from the worn-out canvass. But this representative Memorial still lives to tell its thrilling story of love, and power, and peace. What name so well known as the name of JESUS! “His name shall endure forever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed. And blessed be his glorious name for ever! and let the whole earth be filled with his glory!—Amen, and amen!” *

* Psa. lxxii. 17—19.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MEDIATION OF CHRIST—INVOCATION OF SAINTS.

THE idea of a mediator was not new to the world when Christ was made flesh and dwelt among us. Indeed, the system of Paganism teemed with mediators, male and female, who were supposed to employ their influence with Jupiter, "the father of Gods and men," in behalf of their clients. The Jews considered that their Messiah would be a "day's man" between themselves and God, and, accordingly, they called him the *Middle One*. The office of a mediator is rendered obviously necessary, by the condition in which we are placed. A consciousness of guilt cleaves to man in every region, as the inextricable curse of his existence; and nearly all the devices of superstition are designed to take from sin its sting, and to free the conscience from the agonies of remorse, and the perturbations of Fear. This tormenting passion has demanded many a cruel sacrifice at the altars of idolatry, on which it has shed the noblest and most precious of human blood. But every new calamity called for fresh victims to still the terrors of this dastardly demon, and to give the troubled conscience peace; but in vain. Crime was still perpetrated, and darkness still brooded over the earth. In the *power* which sin continued to maintain over the lives of the people, they had the most convincing evi-

dence that its *guilt* had not been expiated. The blood of their atonements could not cleanse the heart ; and not all the partial favour of their imaginary divinities, could save them from the gloomy apprehensions which a life of sin entails on the believers in a future state. Nor could they receive much comfort from the approbation of their gods—

“ Gods partial, cruel, passionate, unjust,
Whose attributes were rage, revenge, and lust.”

The first ray of hope that beamed on the minds of our guilty progenitors, arose from the announcement of a mediator. The doctrine of the atonement of Christ was wrapt up in the curse which sin brought on our world. Salvation was coeval with guilt, and came forth through its darkness, like a sun issuing from the womb of chaos. The Pagans had gods many and lords many, on whom they relied to reconcile them to the Supreme Being ; but all their fantastic notions were but refracted and discoloured rays from this original light. Hence, they worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.

In opposition to their polytheistical notions, the Apostle declares, “ that “ There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all.” * Another assures us, that “ If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins.” † Peter expresses the same doctrine in the following terms :—“ And there is salvation in no other ; for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” ‡

Upon these texts I observe, 1st.—That there is but *ONE* mediator or intercessor in whom men are to trust, and by whose merits they are to be saved. No words can teach any thing more distinctly than this fact is stated above. The two

* 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.

† 1 John ii. 1, 2.

‡ Acts iv. 12.

parties at variance are *God* and *Men*. The *MAN* Christ Jesus comes between to reconcile them. He alone, of all beings in the universe, is competent to do so. All power is committed to him in heaven and on earth. He is the fountain of wisdom, the incarnation of love, and the Son of God—one with Him in nature and attributes, and therefore “able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by HIM.” This is enough to re-animate a sinking world, and to give hope to the most guilty. He is not a creature that he should fail to accomplish his purposes; but he is also—*THE MAN* Christ Jesus—even “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” “He took on him the seed of Abraham,” and became flesh—a kinsman, a brother—that he might redeem them that were under the law of death.

It was only in the humanity that he could suffer, obey, and die; and as the ransom for our sins, die he must: for without shedding of blood there is no remission. As man, also, he was capable of sympathising with the tempted and miserable, being “in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin; hence, he is able to succour them that are tempted.” Significantly he is called *THE RIGHTEOUS*, by the Apostle John, to denote the merit of his life and death. He was a spotless victim. He magnified the law, and exhibited our common nature in its most perfect form of moral beauty, as a model for the whole human family. Holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, in him even Satan could find nothing amiss. In him, we have not only the severest moral purity, “whiter than snow,” but—(rare combination!)—the utmost meekness, tenderness, and sympathy towards the depraved. Had he taken on him the nature of an archangel, we might have needed an intercessor between *him* and us; but he became a *man*, took on him the form of a *servant*, was *poor* and *despised*, that his character might inspire confidence in the weakest and most timorous of the children of guilt. Oh, it is a fearful thing to invest the throne of grace with fictitious terrors, and to exhibit Jesus,

not extending the golden sceptre of his mercy, but swaying a rod of iron as the "King of Justice!" * Neither Peter, nor Paul, nor John, ever thought of any other name coming between men and the man Christ Jesus! What other man but the **RIGHTEOUS ONE**, could thus stand at the head of our race, and answer the demands of justice upon a world? And, what man or woman could be found with a heart as tender, and with sympathies as many-sided and large, as that of the meek and lowly one, which was offered to the spear on Calvary? Is there any *other name* under heaven, *needed* among men, whereby we shall be saved? Surely we *must* agree with the Apostle Peter, not only that there *is* no other, but that no other is required!

I observe, secondly, on these texts, that, with all acceptable mediation on behalf of sinners, there must be something meritorious to plead, some worthy sacrifice to offer, some compensation to the wronged, some satisfaction to the insulted Majesty of Heaven. Every Jewish priest approaching the altar had "something to offer;" and Christ, when he entered heaven, offered himself! His own blood was the ransom price of our redemption. This he pleads before his Father—on the worth of this atonement he rests the claims of his clients—and in that alone they put their trust. Was Peter, or Paul, or the Virgin, crucified for you? Or were you baptised in the name of Mary? Is she a priestess? And if she be, what sacrifice has she to offer?

As to the place occupied by the saints in the mediatorial system of Rome, I do not mean to represent all her people as holding the sentiments I am about to quote, but they are the sentiments inculcated by the church—a church which will not suffer her authority to be questioned in the least point, any more than in the greatest. Where she compels men to swallow camels, she must deem it unpardonably squeamish to strain at gnats.

* Glories of Mary, *passim*.

The creed of Pope Pius IV. expresses the Roman Catholic faith on this subject as follows:—"I also believe that the saints who reign with Christ, are to be venerated and INVOKED; and that they offer prayers to God for us, and that their relics are to be VENERATED.

This is putting the doctrine in a mild form. We shall find it more fully developed in the manuals of devotion.

In the "Devotion of the Sacred Heart," the worshipper implores all the saints to direct him in all his actions, and says, "Behold I cast myself body and soul into your arms." The Virgin is called the "Holy Ark of the Covenant;" all the spirits in heaven are said "to bless and praise her, *infinitely*," because she is the great "*mediatrix between God and men*, obtaining for sinners all they ask or demand of the Blessed Trinity."

It seems Paul was "grossly ignorant of the Catholic doctrine," when he said, "There is but one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." Peter was equally in the dark about these doctrines, when he said, "There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." In the same book Mary is represented as saying, "I am the protectress of *my servants*. Give me *your heart*, my dear child; and if it be as hard as a flint, *I* will make it as soft as wax; and if it be more foul and loathsome than dirt, *I* will render it more clear and beautiful than crystal." We Protestants believe, that it is God only who can "take away the heart of stone and give us a heart of flesh;" and that it is the Holy Spirit, and not the Virgin Mary, who "purifies our hearts by faith." The worshipper of Mary, in this popular manual of Catholic devotion, is taught to address the object of his adoration thus:—"I reverence you, O sacred Virgin Mary! and TOGETHER WITH THE HOLY TRINITY, BLESS AND PRAISE YOU INFINITELY!" Here is precisely the same kind of adoration that is offered to the Deity. You cannot call it an inferior worship, for then what would be the superior?

Can you add to the infinite? No being can be praised more than "infinitely." No worshipper can give more than his *heart*; it is the very thing which God demands. Let me compose the *prayers* of a people, and I will allow any one who pleases to make their *creed*. It is not in the cold forms of technical definition that doctrines exert their power, but when, embodied in the language of devotion, and living in the heart, they animate the hopes or fears of the worshipper. If Rome burned every one of her creeds and canons, her religion would remain the same!

The writer of the preface to "The Glories of Mary," refers to the catechism of the Council of Trent, as putting an "*infinite difference*" between the worship due to God and the honour given to the saints, and says, "We look for nothing from the saints but the assistance of their prayers." He also observes, that the Virgin has ever been venerated more than the other saints, chiefly because "in his last agony on the cross, he committed the children of the church to *her* care, in the person of St. John, his beloved disciple!" He adds, that when she is invoked to "*assist, defend, deliver us,*" &c., it is always understood, by her prayers and intercession; and if she be styled the *Hope of Sinners*, the *Mediatrix*, the *Refuge of the Afflicted*, the *Help of Christians*, the *Merciful and all-powerful Virgin*,—all these expressions are to be understood in the same limited sense, and to mean no more than that God, in his infinite goodness and mercy, is ever willing to grant her petitions. He also says, that no miracles are received as articles of faith but those contained in Scripture, as if he felt how utterly incredible was that batch with which he was going to furnish the reader. But if the church be infallible, and solemnly records certain transactions as real miracles, and submits them to the admiration of her children in the lives of her canonised saints, and yet will not certify them to be true, nor propose them as articles of faith, what is the use of her infallibility? Does she canonise men and set them up for mediators

in heaven, without knowing whether they were credulous fools, hypocritical knaves, or honest and holy men?*

With regard to "The Glories of Mary," the Author was canonised so late as 1830, and all his works obtained the *unanimous approbation* of the College of Cardinals; therefore, this comes to us, sanctioned by the living, speaking authority, which is said to be equal to the Bible, and, indeed, far superior to it, because it renders Revelation intelligible, and gives to Inspiration "a mouth and wisdom."

Let us now give you some extracts:—"Mary is then the Queen of the Universe, since Jesus is its King." "She became Queen of Mercy, as her Son is King of Justice." Is this putting an "infinite difference" between the creature and the Creator? Who is likely to be more fervently adored, the Sovereign of Mercy, or of Justice? Most certainly the Queen of Mercy will always have the most numerous and intense worshippers among sinners. St. Bernard says, Mary "opens *at pleasure* the abyss of divine mercy, so that no sinner, however enormous his crimes may be, can perish, if protected by Mary." "Let us be convinced," says St. Liguori, "that if she has been crowned Queen of Mercy, it is in order that the greatest sinners may be saved by her intercession, and form her crown in heaven." "Oh! great Queen," says another, "IT IS BY YOU the miserable are saved." "Yes," says St. Bonaventure, "Mary has so loved us, that she has given us her only Son." Thus the love of Mary is equal to the Father's. The same saint adds, "*She sacrificed for us* a Son who was infinitely dearer to her than herself."

Throughout this whole book, Mary is put by this saint in the place of Jesus Christ. It is of *her* David speaks, when he says, "He hath anointed me with the oil of gladness above my fellows." It is *she* that sitteth on the Throne of Grace, around which sinners are exhorted to crowd. To *her* all power is

* No less than four successive Popes gave the sanction of Peter's chair to the Glories of Mary.—(See the introduction)

committed. She is omnipotent; and even God is subject to her authority. She exercises over Jesus the jurisdiction of a *mother*, and “dictates rather than supplicates.” But our judicious saint, our exquisite theologian, the best that could be picked up for canonization in modern times, thus qualifies his doctrines; and we will allow the good man to speak for himself:—“We are far from insinuating, nevertheless, that she is *MORE powerful* than her Son!” And is it possible that this should ever become a matter of doubt in a Christian Church! More powerful than God! And the Pope and Cardinals have sanctioned all this. I trust the people will reject such an impious elevation of the *creature* to the throne of Deity with holy indignation; and as they value the honour of their religion, they should publicly mark the dogmas which these saints have advanced about the Virgin, with an expression of their disapprobation. “Jesus Christ,” he adds, “is our only mediator,” (a play upon words,) “he alone has obtained our reconciliation with God his Father; but, as in recurring to Him, whom we *must necessarily consider a Judge, who will punish the ungrateful*, it is probable a sentiment of *fear* may lessen the confidence necessary for being heard; it would seem, that in applying to Mary, *whose office is that of mercy*, our hope would be so strong as to obtain all we ask for. How is it, that whereas, we ask many things of God, without obtaining them. We no sooner ask through *Mary*, than they are granted us?”*

Can blasphemy go beyond this? ‘The modest writer of the preface to the “Glories of Mary” remarks, that he deemed it “prudent” to prefix some explanatory observations, lest “the *enemies* of the Blessed Mother of God,” might affect to discover new grounds for calumny and invective.

* The Glories of Mary, Mother of God, containing a beautiful paraphrase on the “Salve Regina;” translated from the Italian of St. Alphonsus Li-guori, and carefully revised by a Catholic Priest. Dublin: John Coyne, 1837. Third edition, *passim*.

If we did not know by observation, that religion too often grants a dispensation to folly and sanctifies absurdity, we might well wonder that men of intelligence could speak of the *mother* of the Eternal Creator. We venerate the Virgin Mary for her eminent piety, and rejoice in her happiness in heaven; and so far from being her enemies, we are the best friends of her character. I feel solemnly bound to stand forward in defence of the saints and angels, to free them from the imputations which Catholic writers have cast upon them.

A fouler charge cannot be made against the holy Virgin than to teach, that she could think of usurping the throne of mercy, grasping at an equality with God, and dividing with the Messiah the empire of the universe. Were Mary and the saints capable of *daring* what the Church of Rome represents them as *doing*—like Lucifer and his hosts, they would be hurled from the mansions of glory, and buried in the blackness of darkness for ever. Oh, with what holy indignation—with what earnest deprecation—with what righteous horror, must Mary and the Apostles look down from heaven on their worshippers, if they are conscious of drawing, as they do, the homage of innumerable hearts from him, who is their only, their all-sufficient, and gracious Saviour!

Yes, I avow myself the champion of the Virgin Mary—and I charge the Roman Church with putting words into her mouth, which, if she were capable of uttering them, would prove her not a saint, but a demon. These ascriptions of glory I denounce as aspersions on her immaculate honour, as stains on the snow-like purity of her character.

Is it humility which leads men to worship the creature? If so, it is a false and *proud* humility, such as Paul speaks of in the epistle to the Colossians, (ii. 18,) “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and *worshipping of angels*, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, *vainly puffed up in his fleshly mind*.” Now, if it be a proof of

a vain, presumptuous, and carnal mind, to teach that angels should be worshipped, is it not a still greater proof of such a mind, to inculcate the grovelling worship of our fellow-men and women, who had to struggle against like passions and infirmities with ourselves ?

Cornelius, a devout man, fell down and worshipped Peter, as you read in Acts, (x. 25,) not as God, but as a saint; but Peter refused the homage, saying, "I myself also am *a man*." Will the blessed Apostle be *less* humble in heaven, in the very presence of his glorified Redeemer? In Revelations, * we have a similar example given by a being of a higher order. John fell down and worshipped the glorious angel who forbid him, saying, "See thou do it not; I am thy *fellow-servant*—WORSHIP GOD." Among the arguments for worshipping angels, brought forward in "The Grounds of the Catholic Doctrine," even in an edition published by the late eminent Dr. Doyle, we find this act of John adduced as a scriptural proof, *omitting* the prohibition of the angel! Suppose an act of parliament to run thus:—"Whereas such and such things have been practised, be it enacted, that the said practices are contrary to the honour of the Queen's majesty, &c." What would you think of the lawyer who could quote the preamble for the very purpose of defending the thing forbidden in the enactment? Is it not amazing, that reverend and right-reverend gentlemen can descend to literary frauds that would disgrace a Manor Court attorney, and all for the good of the church? And what sort of an institution must that be, which can be benefited by such chicanery? I do not know how to account for this conduct in so acute and generous a mind as Dr. Doyle's. But, *de mortuis nihil nisi bonum*. I am sorry to be obliged to say so much. It is the vice of the system which I condemn. The noblest minds have been warped by the interests and exigencies of a corporation.

The same manual of controversy advances an amusing argu-

* Chap. xix. 10, and xxii. 8, 9.

ment in favour of invoking the saints. Who, does the reader suppose, is the example that is followed?—whence does the writer draw his proof? The rich glutton in hell supplies the damning precedent!* In this parabolical representation of the invisible world, Abraham indeed hears the prayer, but only to show the folly of trusting to any favourable change beyond the grave; and to teach us, that if we neglect the word of God, we would not believe, though one rose from the dead. A most important warning, doubly important now, when the day-light of a fuller revelation has superseded angels' visits, visions, and apparitions.

There is, however, another proof brought from Revelation, where the prayers of the saints are spoken of in one of the Apocalyptic visions. It is agreed by the best commentators of all parties, that this mystical book contains a symbolical view of the history of the church on earth; and this is also the opinion of *Pastorini*. These passages, † therefore, are designed to represent the acceptableness of the prayers of the saints *while on earth*.

The peculiar care which our Saviour took to check any arrogant feelings among his *kinsmen*, arising from their earthly relationship to him, is remarkable. The attentive reader of the Gospels will recollect several instances of this. Nor was his mother an exception. When but a child, he would not allow even her to interfere with his Father's business. Witness, also, the respectful rebuke with which he met a very slight interference at the wedding of Cana in Gallilee. But the following passage takes away the very foundation of that fabric of mediatorial power which the Church of Rome has erected on the natural relationship:—"A certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps that thou hast sucked. But he said, yea *RATHER blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it.*" ‡

* Luke xvi. 37.

† Rev. v. 8; viii. 4.

‡ Luke xi. 27, 28. See also Luke viii. 21.

The matrons of Israel were long looking for this honour; but Jesus shows them a greater honour. More blessed far to be the daughters of the Lord Almighty, by hearing, believing, and being born of the Spirit. This was a *spiritual* relationship—the only one which Jesus would allow them to lay stress upon. He valued Mary for the loveliness of her character; but it is probable that there are in heaven thousands of women equally blessed and equally honoured by their common Saviour.

What a strange use mystical divines have made of the beautiful and touching incident relating to Mary at the Cross! The aged mother of Jesus, venerable with years and piety, stood by her Son at his dying hour, not terrified by the rage of his enemies, nor scandalised by his ignominy,—and as she wept at the sight of his agony, He said to his beloved John, “Behold thy mother!” and to her, “Behold thy son!” With what intent? That she should become “the protector of all the children of the Church?” What nonsense! No, but that John might thenceforward be her protector;—and so we learn, that ever after she lived at that disciple’s house, and her name is mentioned but once more! Now, if she were regarded as the *Mother* of the Church—as its Queen—as an all powerful Intercessor, would this silence be credible? We have not even a word about her death! Not a single instance of her being prayed to or worshipped!! And yet she was the “great Mediatrix between God and men,” and the Saviour on the Cross had committed to her the guardianship of the Universal Church! No meeting with *her* after his resurrection is recorded. Christ speaks of not leaving the disciples orphans or comfortless, because He would send the Holy Spirit, but no mention of one who was the Queen of Mercy, the Life, Sweetness, Hope and Refuge of the Church! Roman Catholics may believe this. I cannot.

And yet, the present Pope, speaks of her in the following words, as if he had never heard of Jesus Christ, though he mentions him in the context, and as if he had never read one

word of the writings of Peter and Paul:—"The most holy Virgin Mary, *our greatest confidence*, EVEN THE WHOLE FOUNDATION OF OUR HOPE."—*Nostra maxima fiducia*, IMO TOTO RATIO SPEI NOSTRÆ.*

The most extravagant devotee of the dark ages could say nothing more than this. I think, if our more intelligent countrymen gave their serious attention to the subject, they would find that the Pope, who is the patron of the worst of European politics, is not a much safer guide for the next world than for this. It will appear, that Jesus Christ is thrust out of his place as the author of salvation—as the refuge and hope of the guilty, in order to make room for the Madonna; to whom the church has assigned "THE OFFICE OF MERCY." Thus does she give an utterly false view of the character of Jesus. It is true, that he will one day judge the world; but, until that great and notable day of the Lord arrive, he will ever appear as a meek and gracious Saviour, not robed in the dreadful majesty of justice, but smiling in love, and speaking in the accents of tenderness. That he might wear this character of benignity and condescension, he became a poor and persecuted man, without home or property, or wordly respectability—domesticated with poverty, familiar with grief, and schooled in all the vicissitudes of pain and sorrow.—He stooped so low as to wash the feet of his disciples, whom he treated as his intimate friends; and when about to leave them, he said, "I go to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." What terms of endearment are these from the Prince of Life! Did his elevation to the throne of Heaven change his character as mediator? Not in the least; for Paul, to the Hebrews, still speaks of him as a *compassionate High Priest*,—*touched with a feeling of our infirmities, able to succour them that are tempted, &c.* And, in the Apocalypse, his conduct is placed in a light that must surely remove every "sentiment of fear" from the most diffident. "*Behold I stand at the door and knock*; if any man hear my

* Encyclical Letter, anno 1832.

voice, and open the door, *I will come unto him, and will sup with him, and he with me !*"* If *this* does not inspire "the confidence necessary for being heard," what can inspire it? Alas, alas, that "the Holy Father," who rules the Latin Church throughout the world, should require to be taught what are the most prominent and attractive features of the Saviour's character, and the distinguishing nature of that sacerdotal and regal office of which he pretends to wield the delegated power!

I shall, however, for argument's sake, admit, that saints in heaven are suffered to meddle with the intercessorial work of Christ, and still demonstrate, that to *invoke* them is most absurd; more absurd than to stand on the beach, and call for the assistance of a friend at our antipodes in Australia. Where are the saints? In heaven, of course. But where is heaven? The earth says, "It is not in me." Whatever appearance of probability men might have for supposing hell to be an unfathomable abyss in the bosom of our globe, they could have none for imagining the cheerful bowers of paradise blooming with perennial beauty, rejoicing in unclouded sunshine, and cooled by gentle breezes, for ever "winnowing fragrance o'er the smiling land,"—they could have no reason for imagining this blessed region shut up in the centre of the earth; neither is it to be found on the *surface*. Where is that "happy island in the watery waste," which poets and savages have alike fancied the abode of the blessed? It is no where to be found. The moon seems to be as yet but a volcanic mass of rocks—naked, sterile, and dreary; so that we are not to look to that satellite as the locality of heaven, as the sanctuary of the universe, where the glory of Jesus is revealed to his people. But even that is two hundred and forty thousand miles from the earth: rather too far for one finite being to communicate with another. Whiston imagined that hell exists in one of the comets, which whirls the damned to the extremities of heat and cold—now burning in the fervours of the sun, and now freezing

* Rev. iii. 20.

in regions unvisited by his beams. With as much probability might we suppose heaven to be in the sun itself, if we admit that its light and heat proceed from the atmosphere by which it is enveloped; and that it is not an enormous mass of fire, but a glorious world inhabited by intelligent beings. This, indeed, might be deemed by some a worthy palace for the King of the Universe; and as it is more than two million times larger than the earth, the redeemed of every planet (if such there be in any planet but our own) might find room on its surface. Now, the sun is ninety-five millions of miles from the nearest suppliant on our globe, and it is impossible that any ear, but that of the omniscient God, can hear so far! The fixed stars are all suns; and there are those who fancy that the Ruler of the creation sits enthroned on some central orb, to which all suns and systems gravitate, and around which they all revolve; and that this is the abode of the Divine presence, and the scene of eternal happiness. Now, if this be so, we should know, that the nearest of the fixed stars would not be increased or diminished in appearance, by removing it two hundred millions of miles out of its present position! Where, then, is the use of praying to finite beings—to creatures, when we do not know the locality of heaven; and it must be so remote, that its inhabitants can see or hear nothing that goes on upon the earth?

You may, perhaps, reply, that the spirits of the departed have sometimes appeared on earth; and when thus present, they could hear our prayers. Certainly, in ignorant ages, such apparitions were much talked of—and still we hear of them in the dark places of the land. But, when they come, are they invoked? Yes, they are invoked to *begone!* and their quondam friends fly from them as if the devil were at their heels; and, perhaps, the priest is sent for to “lay the ghost,” and doom him to dwell under some old bridge till the day of judgment. The miserable spirit wants to be at rest—but, alas, the place where it formerly dwelt knows it no more! Nobody

seeks the intercession of *ghosts*. We have no information about the blessed Virgin, or any of the Apostles, visiting the world since their death. If one of them came down visibly into a chapel, I am sure the congregation would fly as if the house were on fire.

But even if the Virgin were present listening to you *saying your prayers*, she could not tell whether you were *praying* or not; for a man might say prayers the whole of his life, and never utter one word that God would hear. Acceptable prayer depends on the state of the *heart*.

“Prayer is the soul’s sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.”

And though, by attentive examination, she could discern the state of one spirit, how could she attend to all the rest speaking at the same time? What would become of the thousands upon thousands of congregations throughout the world, all praying to Mary, while she was busy trying to comprehend a few worshippers in one place? Do we live in the nineteenth century? Has the march of intellect done nothing for the Catholics? When will they learn the truth of what was pronounced by the wisest of men in a comparatively dark period of the church. “FOR THOU, EVEN THOU ONLY, KNOWEST THE HEARTS OF ALL THE CHILDREN OF MEN.”* Let them go and learn what that sentence meaneth, and I am sure they will never more be guilty of the absurdity and sin of praying to their fellow-creatures.

It is true, the angels are said to rejoice over sinners that repent; and how do they know when the repentance takes place? They know it from those herald angels,—those ministering spirits, whom God sends forth, and who bear back the tidings to heaven. Or perhaps God himself informs them of the de-

* 1 Kings, viii. 20.

lightful fact, as a fresh incentive to their praise. Some Roman Catholic writers suppose, that when a man prays to a saint, God acquaints the saint of the circumstance, and the saint then prays to Jesus for this unknown suppliant! Was there ever such a cycle of absurdity? The very spirit of earthly despotism imbues the whole Catholic system, and sends its votaries crouching at the feet of court favourites. Would you reject the proffered hand of the *king's son*, who gave you a smiling and hearty welcome, and offered to lead you to his father, and *secure* for you a favourable reception, in order to seek some menial of the palace to introduce you to that very son whose favour you had thus slighted? And if *this* were expressly *forbidden*, how could you hope to be heard?

Be assured, that God *ONLY* knows the hearts of all men—that the omniscient and omnipresent Spirit is the only hearer and answerer of prayer. “The hour is coming,” says Jesus, “and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the FATHER in Spirit and in truth—for the Father seeketh such to worship him.”

CHAPTER XIX.

THE STATE OF THE DEAD—PURGATORY.

THE fact of the soul's immortality, and the cognate doctrine of man's responsibility, seem to have been admitted by all the ancient heathen nations; and to have been acted on as first principles. But, as to the state of the soul in the invisible world, opinions were various. Those of the ancient Greeks are embodied in the poetry of Homer,—whose imagination peopled the desolate regions of the dead with monsters “too fabulous for fiction.” The giant stretched over nine acres of land, whose liver was destined to “feed the eternal voracity of the vulture,” was a mass of misery sufficiently frightful, but it could not affect the sympathies or influence the conduct of ordinary mortals. Besides, in the distribution of rewards and punishments there was little regard to the moral worth of the parties. The ghosts of the holiest seers, and most illustrious heroes, crowded around Ulysses to lap the blood of his sacrifice, and were frightened away like birds when he flourished his sword. Opulent as the great poet is in imagery, when painting earthly scenes, and lavishly as his imperial genius scattered the flowers of fancy, adorning the humblest topics with perennial beauty, he seems to shiver like his own ghosts in the atmosphere of Elysium. He sings of no cheerful sce-

nery, no varying beauty, no splendid city, no intellectual employments, or moral pleasures. His discontented shadows flit mournfully over "the yellow meads of Asphodel," cooled by refreshing breezes from the sea, and attempting in vain to repeat the mere animal pleasures of the past; still dwelling in the penumbra of the world they had left, and sighing to return to regions illuminated by the cheerful sun, where they might mingle once more in the sports and strifes of living men.

Virgil's picture of the state of the dead is much more awfully coloured, more richly embellished, and, in a moral point of view, incomparably more sublime. But, fearful as are the punishments which he allots to the more flagitious criminals, his infernal judge has little or no regard to equity; and hence his decisions could have but a feeble effect on the mind in the hours of temptation. The innocent babe torn from its mother's bosom—the virtuous member of society perishing in a distant land, and denied the rights of sepulture, are doomed to the same desolate abode with the suicide. We shall not dwell, however, on the vague conjectures and dim imaginations of the heathen in regard to a future state, but merely direct the reader's attention to a passage in Virgil on the subject of *purgatory*:—

" For this the souls a various *penance* pay,
To *purge* the taint of former crimes away:
Some in the sweeping breezes are refined,
And hung on high to whiten in the wind.
Some *cleanse their stains* beneath the gushing streams,
And some rise glorious from the scorching flames.
Thus all must suffer; and those sufferings past,
The clouded minds are purified at last.
But when the circling seasons as they roll,
Have cleansed the dross long gathered round the soul;
When the celestial fire divinely bright,
Breaks forth victorious in her native light,—
Then we, the chosen few, Elysium gain,
And here expatiate on the blissful plain." *

* Pitt's Virgil, *Æneid*, B. vi. 739—747.

SECTION I.—ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF PURGATORY.

THIS is certainly an ancient doctrine. It existed for hundreds of years before the Church thought fit to borrow it from the pagans. It entered deeply into the pantheistic theology of the East, whence it was derived by the Greeks and Romans, and formed part of that philosophy, "falsely so called," which began early to corrupt the Christian creed. We find the practice of praying for the dead beginning to prevail before the close of the second century; and from the practice of praying *for* them, that of praying *to* them followed in process of time. But we shall see just now, that the fact that the dead were *prayed* for, is no proof of a belief in purgatory. It was not for centuries after, when the tide of corruption had risen to its height, that this belief was spread over the greater part of Christendom. Indeed, it never could be embraced where there were correct views of the atonement. When people came to fancy that they could justify themselves—that they could stand before the Searcher of hearts in their own righteousness,—that salvation was not of grace but of works,—not of divine mercy, but of human merit,—then there must have been such misgivings of conscience, such internal wavering and fear concerning the purity and value of these works, as would of course, lead the soul to catch at any hope beyond the grave,—any ray of heavenly light that might be visible even beyond the fiery mountains of purgatory. Besides, as already remarked, when penances became so enormous as to render it impossible to pay the debt in this life, it was thought only reasonable that there should be space to do it in the next, forgetting that this difficulty was created by the ignorant and superstitious clergy, and not by God.* The rich, indeed, relied on their gifts, bequests, and endowments. They could, by their property, command the resources of the Church at the hour of death, and even in eternity!

* Bishop Burnet says he saw one Plenary Indulgence, for ten hundred thousand years.—Burnet on Article xxii.

They never thought of the strait gate till their latter end came, and then the priest was at hand to open Heaven for a consideration. A wealthy man might drink in iniquity like water, till he had physical strength to drink no more, though the thirst raged still;—and then have three sacraments—penance, the eucharist, and extreme unction, crowded into one hour. If he went to purgatory after all this “grace,” it would be strange;—but even so, there was a remedy at hand,—masses might be offered for the repose of his soul, and money could procure any number of them he might think necessary to make assurance doubly sure.

This is the evil working of the doctrine: it strengthens men in sinful courses. When death is believed to be the end of all,—the termination of the day of mercy, hope, and trial,—“the night when no man can work,” or repent, or trust, or be pardoned, then men will take care that life is not wasted in folly and sin. They will not sleep as do others, but will be up and doing for eternity, laying up treasures for heaven. We know we must die,—we cannot tell the moment when the suspended sword may cut the vital thread. What an argument for immediate repentance, anxious vigilance, and hourly preparation, to meet our God! But if you take away this warning office from death—push the boundary of hope beyond this life, and give a prospect ever so faint of pardon in eternity, you break down one of the mightiest barriers to vice, and flood the land with iniquity. *Now* is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. Here we are exercised with various discipline;—here we wrestle, and run, and strive, and fight the good fight of faith, knowing that death is the goal, where we shall receive the “conqueror’s crown,” or be spurned with shame and everlasting contempt. “It is appointed unto men once to die, and *after that the judgment*,” when we shall receive rewards “according to the deeds done in the body, whether good or bad.” Such is the current language of Scripture. According to the teaching of the Holy Spirit, paradise brightens and blooms on the very

verge of this dark and thorny wilderness. Death is the Jordan that flows between the desert and the land of promise. Or, when the Christian life is compared to a voyage, there is no *quarantine* to retard the vessel from the haven of eternal rest, "where it would be."

Not only does the dogma of purgatory strengthen the hands of the wicked, by promising them life, but it also makes the hearts of the righteous sad, whom the Lord hath not made sad. Most philosophically was it said to the people of Israel, who wept at the reading of the law in the days of Ezra, that the "joy of the Lord was their strength." Desire, hope, confidence, joy, are the most powerful principles of action,—the springs of all the Christian's virtue and usefulness. Break, or weaken them, and there is an end to zeal and activity in the service of God. Fear and despondency relax all the sinews of the soul. But let the cheering objects of our hope be *near*; let there be nothing between us and them; let no ocean of flame roll between earth and heaven; and then all the powers of the soul will be roused into intense action in the service of God. Not only so, but heaven will be anticipated in the experience of the believer, whose hope is full of immortality, and rejoices in tribulation,—rejoices "with joy unspeakable and full of glory." I need not say that such a state of mind is incompatible with a belief in purgatory. That belief produces in the truly pious and humble mind, a most painful and fearful expectation of judgment and fiery indignation. Then, think of the lacerated feelings and distressing suspense of the mourning relatives who are left behind. It is not for *them* to exclaim, "Oh death, where is thy sting? Oh grave, where is thy victory?" The sting of death is purgatory, which it seems Christ was unable to remove!

The history of the doctrine of purgatory furnishes a remarkable and most instructive illustration of the progress of error. Roman Catholic writers are accustomed to quote certain passages from the Fathers, regarding offerings for the dead, in

such a way as to make them bear on purgatory. We shall soon see that nothing can be more unfair. Meantime, it is important to remark, that Tertullian, who flourished at the end of the second, and beginning of the third century, is the earliest writer quoted in favour of prayers for the dead. At the period just mentioned, the custom had crept in of celebrating the death of the martyrs, when the Christians feasted together and made offerings to the poor, while the bishop pronounced a eulogium upon him who had been faithful unto death, and was believed to have received the crown of life. The offerings are sometimes called “sacrifices,” for or in honour of the martyrs, and other illustrious saints. Thus Cyprian says, “We always offer sacrifices for them, as you remember, as often as we celebrate the passions and days of the martyrs, by an anniversary commemoration.”* Cyprian designates the persons for whom these offerings were made as our happy brethren, by the *issue of a glorious death passing to immortality*.”† “Sufficiently blessed,” he observes, “are those of you, who journeying by these footsteps of glory, have already departed from life; and the path of virtue and faith having been completed, have arrived at the presence of the Lord, (ad complexum et osculum Domini,) the Lord himself rejoicing.”‡ Surely that was not purgatory at which they had arrived! and yet offerings were made for *them*. The martyrs were believed to have entered “without *any delay*” into glory; therefore, neither the prayer, nor the “sacrifices” made on their behalf, can have any thing to do with purgatory.

Tertullian writes:—“We make oblations for the dead, *for their birth-days to heaven*, on the anniversary day.” The words in Italics are *suppressed in the Faith of Catholics*, from which Roman Catholics usually borrow their quotations from the Fathers. The phrase in Latin is, “*pro Natalitiis*,” which the Jesuit, De la Cerda, interprets thus:—“By natalitia, Ter-

* Epist. 39.

† Epist. 12.

‡ Epist. 37; Test. De Cor. Milit.

tullian means the days on which saints, dead to the world, are BORN TO HEAVEN. . . . For, he adds, Christian survivors give to a saint's dissolution the name of birth." * Another Roman commentator on Tertullian gives the same interpretation almost in the same words. In like manner Cyprian speaks of not offering sacrifice for the "decease" of a certain individual whose name had been struck out of the list of persons commemorated on the anniversary day. The word used for death is "*dormitio*," which Roman Catholics translate "repose," to which they attach the idea of a cessation from torture. It evidently means sleep,—the sleep of death,—which alludes to the *body*, perhaps, rather than the soul, and beautifully intimates the *awakening* at the resurrection.

That prayers were offered for apostles, virgins, martyrs, and even for *Mary* the "Queen of Virgins," will be further evident from one or two quotations from the ancient Liturgies. In those of the churches of Egypt, which carry the title of St. Basil, Gregory Nazienzen, and Cyril of Alexandria, it is thus written:—"Be mindful, O Lord, of thy saints; vouchsafe to remember all thy saints which have pleased thee from the beginning, our holy Fathers, the *patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, preachers, evangelists*, and all the souls of the just, which have died in the faith; and *especially* the holy, glorious, the evermore VIRGIN MARY, the Mother of God," &c. In the Liturgy of the Church of Constantinople, ascribed to St. Chrysostom, the officiating minister says:—"We offer unto thee this reasonable service for those who are *at rest in the faith*—our forefathers, fathers, patriarchs, prophets, and *apostles, preachers, evangelists, martyrs, confessors, religious persons*, and every spirit perfected in the faith—but *especially* for our most holy, immaculate, most blessed Lady MARY, Mother of God, and evermore Virgin." †

* Oper. Paris, 1624, p. 657.

† Usher's Answer to a Jesuit, quoted in Pope's Rom. Misquot; and in the Oxford Tract on purgatory, pp. 70, 71.

Were all these in purgatory detained there for hundreds, some of them thousands of years? Every Catholic will answer, No! Therefore, the practice of praying for the dead, in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries, proves nothing at all in favour of such a place of punishment. Besides, if the ancient Christians had the least idea of any such receptacle of souls, crying, *Miserere nobis! miserere nobis!*—"Have pity on us! have pity on us!"—*must they not have remembered their mournful condition in these liturgies?*

That the oblations or sacrifices made in honour of the martyrs on the anniversary day were contributions for the poor of the church, is expressly asserted by the Councils of Carthage and Vaison, which denounced excommunication against all who withheld them; or, as they expressed it, "Kept back the oblations for the dead." Such illiberal persons are declared to be the "murderers of the poor."* No doubt the Anglicans will be reviving these Catholic parties,—feasting yearly over the graves of Thomas á Becket, Archbishop Laud, and the Monk of Cluni, the great apostles of high churchism.† Why do they not practice what they believe? or hold their peace, if it were only to hide their gross inconsistency, and ecclesiastical perfidy?

The Fathers, it is true, often speak of a fire of purgation after this life, but such a one as utterly destroys the notion of an intermediate purgatory; for it was not to be kindled till the day of judgment,—and then all the saints, even the "immaculate Mary," was to pass through it. Origen, a very fanciful and speculative writer, seems to have been the first that spoke plainly of it; he was followed by St. Ambrose, Basil, Hilary, Jerome, and Lanctantius, who unanimously affirm that "all men, Christ only excepted, shall be burned with the fire of the world's conflagration at the day of judgment; even the blessed Virgin herself is to pass through this fire!"‡

* Scultens, Med. Theol. Patrum. Amb. 1603, p. 307; apud Pope, p. 199.

† The British Critic calls them "Saints of the most God."

‡ See Travels of an Irish Gentleman, &c., vol. i. c. 9.

The reader will be glad to see an instructive passage on this subject from the pen of the celebrated Bishop Fisher ; and if he be a Catholic, he will peruse it with deep interest, and not without a feeling of surprise. It strongly confirms my remarks as to the connexion of Indulgences with purgatory, showing that one abuse engenders another ; and that for either of those dogmas we look in vain to Scripture, or even to the traditions of the primitive church :—"No orthodox person, indeed, now wavers touching the existence of purgatory ; mention of which among the old writers of that day is found either not at all, or as seldom as possible. But, even at the present day the Greeks do not believe that there is a purgatory. Neither was faith either in purgatory or indulgences so necessary in the early church as in the present day. For, in former times, charity reached to such a pitch of ardour, that each one was most willing to suffer death in the cause of the Redeemer. Crimes were few, and those which were committed were punished by the great severity of the canons. Now, on the other hand, a great proportion of the people would sooner throw off the profession of Christianity than submit to the rigour of the canons ; so that not without the largest effusion of the Holy Spirit has it happened, that, after the space of so many years, faith in purgatory, and the use of indulgences, were generally received by the orthodox, As long as there was no concern as to purgatory, no one sought for indulgences ; for all the credit of indulgences depends on it (purgatory.) If you take away purgatory, what need will there be of indulgences ? For if there be no purgatory, we shall not stand in want of them. Bearing, therefore, in mind, that for some time the doctrine of purgatory was unknown, afterwards that it was gradually believed by some persons, partly from revelations,* partly from the Scriptures, and thus at length the faith of it was generally accredited by the orthodox church, with the greatest facility we obtain some account of indulgences. Since, therefore, purgatory was *so lately known and received*

* That is—dreams.

by the universal church, who can wonder that in the beginning of the infant church there was no use of indulgences? Indulgences, then, had their origin after that the fears of men had been for a time excited by the horrors of purgatory.”*

Purgatory was lately known and received by the universal church! Indeed! The middle place, the state of *post-mortem* trial and purification was unknown to saints and councils for hundreds of years! And it required a large effusion of the Holy Spirit to make men believe it; and this effusion was reserved for an age so corrupt that they would rather apostatise than obey the laws of the infallible church! And indulgences, too, were produced by the terrors of purgatory, like Venus, from the foam of the agitated sea! Now, what if it were said that *hell* was unknown to the ancient Catholic Church, that none of the early Christians believed in its existence, because none of them was wicked enough to be damned? It is evident, even from this lame apology which the venerable Bishop makes for the lateness of these dogmas, that purgatory is a novelty invented for the sake of indulgences; and both were invented for the sake of the money, which is truly the “root of all evil” in the church. The doctrine of purgatory seems to have been finally established by Eugene IV. in the Council of Ferrara, adjourned to Florence, in 1439.

“Through this doctrine the Popes were, in fact, invested with a vast control over the human conscience, even in the moderate exercise of their power, because it was a power that overstepped the limits of the visible world. But when they proceeded, as they did soon proceed, flagitiously to abuse it, and when through the progress of that abuse, people at length were taught to believe, that perfect absolution from all the penalties of sin could be procured from a human being, and procured too, not through fervent prayer, and deep and earnest contribution, but by military service, or by pilgrimage, or even

* Apert. Lutheran. Confutat. per Joan Roffens. Episc., art. 18, Colon 1559. Apud Pope, p. 195.

by gold,—it was then that the evil was carried so far as to leave the historian doubtful, whether any thing be any where recorded more astonishing than the wickedness of the clergy, except the credulity of the vulgar.”* Again, “The object of the indulgence was changed repeatedly, yet never so changed as to take the guise of philanthropy. First, it was the recovery of the Holy Land, and the extirpation of the infidel. Then from the general foe of Christ it was turned against the spiritual adversaries of the Catholic Church; from the spiritual adversaries of the church it descended to the temporal enemies of the Pope. It next assumed a more innocent shape, (if superstition could ever be innocent,) and summoned the obedient pilgrims to enrich, on stated jubilees, the apostolical shrines of Rome. Lastly, it degenerated into a mere vulgar, undisguised implement, for supplying the necessities of the pontifical treasury; and it was in this last form that it at length aroused the scorn and indignation of Europe.”†

SECTION II.—ALLEGED SCRIPTURE PROOFS FOR THE
DOCTRINE.

WE shall now see by what Scriptural arguments a doctrine so novel, and so productive of evil, is attempted to be supported. First, the “*prison*” mentioned by our Lord, ‡ is alleged to be purgatory. If it be, is it not a wonder that the Fathers of the primitive church, by whose unanimous consent Catholic Priests are sworn to expound Scripture, never made the discovery? To *them*, as Bishop Fisher admits, this prison was utterly unknown. Was it opened for the special accommodation of the clergy and their uncontrite penitents in the dark ages? “Agree with thine adversary quickly,” &c.
“Thou shalt not come out thence *till thou* hast paid the last farthing.” If God be the “adversary,” (and he must be, ac-

* Waddington's Church History, p. 674.

† Ibid. p. 684.

‡ Matthew v. 25.

according to the argument,) then the person exhorted to *reconciliation* is in a state of condemnation for "*mortal sins*," and can never hope to enter purgatory! His faults are not venial: he is an enemy of God. No argument for the temporary nature of his punishment can be drawn from the word "*till*," for it does not necessarily imply limited duration. For instance, the raven did not return to the ark *till* the waters were dried up;—that is, she *never* returned. Christ sits at his Father's right hand *till* his enemies are made his footstool; and not only till then, but *for ever*. And Joseph knew not Mary *till* she brought forth her first-born son. I ask the Roman Catholic reader, *did* he know her *after*? Then, nothing can be built on the word "*till*." Our Saviour represents the pardoning mercy of God by the parable of the debtor and creditor;—the former owed his king ten thousand talents, for which he commanded both himself, and his wife and children, to be sold; but, in compliance with the man's humble entreaty, he "forgave him ALL." Now, when our divine and compassionate creditor forgives the "*talents*," does he cast into prison and torture for the *farthings*? Does he cancel the principal sum because the debtor "had not to pay," and then for a miserable fraction, a few *venial* faults, "deliver him to the tormentors?" Oh, how dishonouring are such notions to the superabounding grace of God! When we speak of a man's being compelled to pay the "last farthing," does not that give us the idea that he must discharge the *whole* debt, and not merely a paltry item at the tail of the account? Even this wicked debtor who owed ten thousand talents, and acted so cruelly towards his fellow-servant, was delivered to the tormentors "TILL he should pay all that was due to him?"* Therefore the prison represents *hell*.

The next argument refers to the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is not to be pardoned either "in this world, or the world

* Matt. xviii. 34.

to come.”* Not that the particular sin mentioned could be forgiven in eternity, but it is thought that there is an implication, that other sins could—that pardon is possible beyond the grave. But the text just explained, (Matt. v. 25,) declares expressly that it is *not*. If the prisoner be in purgatory, he shall “*by no means* come out thence till he has PAID the last farthing!” Now, if this does not mean that he shall never be *forgiven*, there is no meaning in language. The remission of a debt, and the rigid exaction of payment, will signify one and the same thing. According to the parallel passage in Mark, † he “*hath never* forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.” In Luke ‡ it is simply said, “It shall *not* be forgiven.”

What then is meant by “the world to come?” The Christian dispensation—the reign of grace and mercy shadowed forth by the ancient jubilee, and anticipated with joy as the era of liberty to the captive, forgiveness to the debtor, plenty to the poor, justice to the oppressed, and gladness to the mourner. Hence the expression current among the Jews, which our Lord, according to his custom, adopted, concerning enormous crimes, that they would not be forgiven in that (the Jewish) age, nor in the *age* to come: || that is, the age of the Messiah.

From these texts it is plain, the dogma of purgatory can get no help whatever. We proceed to another. This occurs in Paul’s first epistle to the Corinthians, to which the reader is referred. The Apostle begins the chapter by complaining of the carnality of the Corinthians, as proved by their *divisions*. The spirit of partizanship had got in among them—one saying, “I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos.” He then compares Paul, Apollos, Cephas, to husbandmen,—God’s fellow-labourers. § And again, viewing the church as a *building* or

* Matt. xii. 32.

† Mark iii. 29.

‡ Luke xii. 10.

|| The word *αἰών*, translated “*world*,” means an *age* or dispensation.

§ *i. e.* they were fellow-labourers employed by God—not “co-workers with Him.”

temple, he calls the Apostles skilful architects,—“wise master-builders.” The people were prone to regard them as their *foundations*, each party building on its favourite. But Paul condemns this folly, and says, (v. 11,) “Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” Now, *what* are the *materials* which he describes as built on this foundation? Some say *doctrines*, as if *these* could be tried by fire; some *works*, as if *they* could not be known, what sort they are, till “the day” should declare them. Are not men known by their fruits? Cannot even the world “see our good works?” Paul does not say, that the building is composed of either doctrines or works, but he does expressly say, that it is composed of *persons*, of professing Christians:—“Ye are God’s building”—“Know ye not that *ye* are the temple of God?” “For the temple of God is holy, which temple *ye* are.” What language can more plainly prove that the emblematic materials of gold, silver, precious stones, and wood, hay, and stubble, respectively represent true and false professors—real Christians and hypocrites? Whatever is sterling, genuine, solid, and enduring in the Christian character, is represented by the former class of images; whatever is false, worthless, weak, perishable, is included under the latter.

What, then, are the builders? Answer, the pastors of the church, the ministers of religion. It is *their* work that shall be “made manifest,” “declared,” “revealed by fire;” and it is some of them that are to be saved “so as by fire,” while they suffer the loss of their work, which is to be burned up. How? By what fire? The fire of affliction or persecution, which only those who love the Lord Jesus *in sincerity* will survive. The building, so far as its materials are spurious, is not *saved*, but destroyed by fire. The minister, as a real Christian, though a careless pastor, shall be saved from the ruin of his ill-considered work, not *by* fire, but “so as by fire.” It is a term of comparison. He is saved like one rushing from the flames of a burning house—like a brand plucked from the burn-

ing. This building is the Christian temple, and, according to the Catholic argument, the *whole spiritual Church* of Christ must be wrapped in a conflagration, including its foundation of apostles and prophets, and Christ himself the chief corner-stone!

This idea reminds me of another monstrous consequence resulting from the doctrine. Believers—all the “faithful”—compose the mystical body of Christ; for we are “members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones;”* consequently, the *body* of Christ is tormented in purgatory! Again, he is the vine—we are the branches; and, according to Catholic doctrine, not only a withered branch, but the whole tree is cast into the fire! But if the members of Christ are severed from their head,—amputated from his mutilated body, in order that they may be tortured apart,—then it follows that He was not “in all points tempted like as we are;”—his people are doomed to sufferings with which the most dreadful miseries of this life are not worthy to be compared for a moment—of which *He* never had, and never could have any experience; unless, indeed, his *spirit* went into purgatory at his death, a point which cannot be proved, as I shall show immediately. Add to this, that the blessed Saviour allows his own “brethren” to remain agonizing in fire, from day to day, and from year to year—enduring pangs, from which they would gladly escape, to be nailed to the cross; for *it* would be, in comparison, a bed of roses! And their Heavenly Father, who so tenderly pities his own children, who knows their frame, remembers that they are dust, and loves them with an everlasting love, being merciful to their unrighteousness, and remembering their sins no more†—He allows these objects of his paternal regard thus cruelly to be tormented, for no conceivable purpose, except to enrich a pampered priesthood!

There is only one other passage relied on as an argument

* Ephesians v. 30.

† See Psa. ciii. and Heb. viii.

from the New Testament in defence of this doctrine ; but, like the others, it needs only to be explained to show that it does not apply. It regards the *spirits in prison*, mentioned by Peter. * Speaking of the spirit by which our Lord was brought to life, he says, “by which (spirit) he went and preached to the spirits in prison ; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls, were saved by water.”

1. Observe that Peter speaks a little before of the Spirit of Christ as inspiring all the ancient prophets.† It was “the Spirit of Christ which was in them” that did signify the things that should happen concerning himself. And just as he preached by the prophets, he went and preached by Noah during the space of a hundred and twenty years, when “the long-suffering of God waited while the ark was a preparing.”

2. The persons to whom Christ in his divine nature thus preached, were “disobedient”—that is, unbelieving and rebellious. In fact, they were that ungodly and horribly wicked generation, who despised all Noah’s warning,—whose crimes wreaked up to heaven for vengeance, making God repent that he had made man,—and they all perished in their sins. If therefore, there be in the lowest deep of hell a lower still, to that they descended, and *that* was their prison.

3. They were not in that prison, but *on* the earth, *when* Christ went and preached to them ; but they were in it from their death till the time *when Peter wrote* ; and will remain in it, “reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, to the judgment of the great day.”‡ Therefore, even if there were a purgatory, such criminals, destroyed for their transgressions, could not go to it.

But is it not said,—“He descended into *hell*?” Yes, there

* 1 Peter, iii. 19, &c.

† 1 Peter, i. 11.

‡ Jude i. 6.

is such an expression in the creed called the Apostle's creed, which was compiled long after the Apostles were dead, and therefore possesses no authority. However, its meaning in this case is quite misunderstood. The word *Hell* had originally the same sense as *Hades*, which, as its etymology imports, means the *invisible region*, referring to that unseen world "from which no traveller returns." It is used to describe the state of departed souls, comprising the condition of those in "Abraham's bosom," as well as of those tormented with Dives. It was a general term for the "spirit-land," which expressed nothing as to the condition of the departed. Thus, when in the Acts we read,—“Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell,”—the meaning is, that the soul would not remain in a *separate state*, but would again re-animate his body. Like many other English words, "*hell*" has passed from a general to a particular and a bad sense, and is now restricted to the place of the damned. I may add, that the word here rendered "soul" means "*life*,"—and sometimes it signifies a human body, and even a "*corpse*." * *Hades*, also, frequently denotes the *Grave*; so that, according to a well-known figure in Hebrew poetry, the passage quoted by Peter, from the 16th Psalm, would read thus:—

“Thou wilt not leave my body in the grave, nor suffer thine holy one to see corruption.”

I may be justly asked, where was the Redeemer's soul while his body was in the grave? I say, *justly*, not that the cause of Purgatory would gain any thing by our not being able to answer the question, but because those who differ from us are entitled to all the satisfaction we can give them. The following solution of the difficulty will, I think, be deemed conclusive by all candid persons. Jesus when expiring said to the penitent thief, "*To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.*" Paradise is not, certainly, a prison nor a place of fiery torment.

* See Parkhurst's Greek Lexicon, *in voc.*

It indicates a state of enlargement, of repose, and blissful enjoyment. Should any one say, that it is the same as “Abraham’s bosom,” and that this was a place of privation, where the souls of the faithful, departed before Christ, were detained till he should come and lead them to Heaven, whose gates were not opened to mankind till He entered them in triumph. To this I answer—1st, If when Christ “descended into *hell*,” and “preached to the spirits in *prison*,” he went into the place called “Abraham’s bosom,”—then were all the patriarchs in Purgatory! Abel, the first martyr, had been suffering there four thousand years. Enoch, whom “God took,” was taken alive to a prison, and was there tortured body and soul, for thousands of years! Abraham, the father of the faithful, so favoured by Jehovah on earth,—who lived in reliance on the promise of a glorious inheritance, was dwelling for many a long century in darkness—as if Jehovah had forgotten his word, or was unable to keep it! Moses, whom God himself buried on the mount, was consigned to the same dismal abode. And so with all the illustrious saints, so celebrated by an inspired pen in the Epistle to the Hebrews.*

2ndly. That “Abraham’s bosom” was not a place of punishment, or privation, or darkness, is plainly intimated by the Eastern imagery that it presents to the mind, so beautifully expressive of repose, festivity, and social joy. The same is also implied in the very word *paradise*, borrowed from the scene of primeval innocence and bliss.

3dly. When Lazarus went to Abraham’s bosom, he was “*comforted*,” and this imports much of positive enjoyment. The Holy Spirit himself, the fountain of peace and joy, is called the Comforter. Roman divines exhaust the powers of language in describing the horrors of Purgatory. Every one of its inmates can say with the rich man, “I am tormented in this place;” but it cannot be said of any of them—“he is com-

* Heb. xi.

forted." There is no comfort,—no, not for a moment, in Purgatory!

4thly. The paradise to which our Lord went, and whither the ransomed malefactor accompanied him, is Heaven. It was the name then given to the abode of the blessed, enjoying the beatific presence. This is clear from a passage in one of Paul's Epistles :—" I knew a man in Christ about fourteen years ago (whether in the body I cannot tell, or out of the body I cannot tell : God knoweth,) such an one caught up to the *third heaven*." I presume few will aspire to rise higher than the third heaven ; and still fewer will contend that to be " caught up" into it is the same as to descend into hell ! But this same third heaven is the paradise to which our Lord went when he died, bearing with him the penitent thief as the most illustrious trophy of his redeeming power. Paul continues :—" And I knew such a man, . . . how he was *caught up* into PARADISE, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."* It would be insulting the reader's understanding to say one word to prove that Paradise is the third heaven ; and that it is therefore the place of the Divine glory and beatific vision. So much for seeking purgatory in the bosom of Abraham, and supposing that Christ descended into hell, when in fact, his spirit went up to the third heaven.

Let us dwell a moment on the case of the penitent thief saved on the cross ; that awfully vicious character, who had associated with the vilest of mankind ; who had passed through no purifying discipline, had made no restitution for his robberies, no atonement for his blasphemies. How were the old stains of depravity purged out of *his* heart ? Were they burned out in purgatory ? No ; that soul steeped and dyed in customary sin, was washed in the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness, even the BLOOD OF JESUS, which cleanseth from *all* unrighteousness !" Is it not of this, and not purgatory, that the pro-

* 1 Cor. xii. 2, &c.

phet speaks when he says, "though your sins were as crimson, they shall be made *white as snow*?" Was it of purgatory David thought, when he said to God whom he had offended,— "Wash me with hyssop, and I shall be *whiter than snow*?" These were all emblematical of the atonement; for do we not read of the redeemed in heaven, that "they washed their robes and made them *white* in the blood of the Lamb?" And do *they* not sing eternal praises to Him, "who washed them from their sins in his own blood?" Yes, HE washed them—washed them white—as white as snow; yea, whiter than snow! And yet you say that, when the blood of Christ has done its utmost, when this wonderful fountain of purity has been applied in all its power,—when the soul emerges whiter than the fresh-fallen snow on the mountain brow, from this laver of regeneration—this all cleansing ablution, it is still after all necessary to enter purgatory! Shame!

What is the hope of the believer? The prophet tells us that "the righteous is taken away from the evil to come."* Certainly not, if he is taken away to purgatory. For he never knew what evil was, and never should, if he lived to the age of Methuselah, till he goes *there*. There trouble never ceases—there the weary are never at rest. Were all the tortures ever inflicted by the Inquisition crowded into one hour of fierce, inconceivable agony, until tears of sympathy are drawn from the skull of death,—and let that awful hour be multiplied by thousands, and tens, and hundreds of thousands, and you may have possibly a faint conception of the pains of purgatory.

Paul declares, that in the case of the faithful, "to die is gain."† Yes, it is to gain a crown of glory—not to gain the *loss* of all happiness in purgatory! To depart and be with Christ is far better than to abide in the flesh; therefore, when a Christian departs, he *is* with Christ, and if so, he is not in purgatory. Where He lifts up the light of his countenance,

* Isa. lvii. 1.

† Phil. i. 21, 23.

there is no darkness ; where he smiles, there is no pain. “ I go, saith he, to prepare a place for you, that *where I am, there ye may be also*. In my Father’s house are many mansions.” But none of these mansions is a smoky dungeon, like a prison under the walls of a feudal castle. No, no ; such are not the tidings which the Paraclete whispers to the heart of the suffering and tempted Christian. He tells us that “our light afflictions which are but for a moment, shall work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”* He proclaims to us, “Blessed are the dead that die *in the Lord*, for they rest from their labours ;”—aye, and from their sufferings and sorrows ;—“and their works do follow them.”† He tells us that we should not sorrow for them who have fallen asleep in Jesus, “as those who have no hope.” But if they are in purgatory, we ought to weep day and night. Paul says—“To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.”‡ Here is no intermediate stage of suffering. This is the Gospel—this is glad tidings ! But though the priest *pardons* the dying—gives him the “Lamb of God”—anoints him, all is not enough ; death plunges the child of God into an ocean of flame ! We may well ask, is this the Gospel ?

* 2 Cor. iv. 17.

† Rev. xiv. 13.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 8.

CHAPTER XX.

THE USE OF IMAGES IN WORSHIP.

THERE are three doctrines on this subject in the Roman Church. One sect, led on by Bossuet, Gotter, Challenor, Wiseman, and the rest of that *prudent* generation, call images the “books of the ignorant,” designed merely to excite proper feelings in the worshipper towards the objects which they represent, operating as a remembrancer, like the altar among Jews, or the Bible among Christians, or a family picture that recalls the memory of a dear departed relative or friend. Roman advocates ask, “What would an Orangeman say, if a political opponent tore down from the hall a picture of William III. and trampled on it?”

1. Now, we must admit, that if we had accurate likenesses of our Lord, his Apostles, and Mary, we should regard them with peculiar interest; but a picture at the best can give us very little information, even granting that it gives the expression to the life. Physiognomy, thus faintly reflected on canvass, can reveal little of the character, and nothing of the history or habits of the subject. If we have known these from other sources, a good likeness may recal them to the memory. Thus pictures may, perhaps, render more vivid the devout impressions of the intelligent, but cannot possibly *instruct* the

ignorant. No one, except those unhappy persons who depend on pictures for their knowledge, will maintain that we have any true portraits of Christ, or of his immediate followers. The story about our Saviour making a present of his portrait to the King of Edessa, and to a lady named Veronica, will find few believers now out of the enlightened class above-mentioned, though sanctioned by the second Council of Nice; and still fewer will admit that the Virgin Mary sat for her picture to St. Luke. What is called the image of Christ might as well be the image of any crucified Jew; and that of Mary would as truly represent any beautiful young woman of that nation. With regard to the ugly caricatures that adorn the bed-rooms of the devoutly ignorant, it is but little to say that they are mere painted libels; and for the honour of the saints, they ought to be burned!

2. The second school has a numerous party of adherents, headed by Baronius, Bellarmine, &c. Their doctrine is, that an imperfect or inferior worship is to be given to the images of Christ and the saints. Bellarmine has shown, that this was sanctioned by the second Council of Nice, while modern apologists of Rome deny that it is the doctrine ratified at Trent. Now, either Trent agrees with Nice or not. If *not*, two "infallible" councils clash and contradict one another. If they *do* agree, then the cordial curses of the second Council of Nice fall thickly and heavily on the heads of all those modern controversialists who maintain that images are used for assisting the memory, and *not* for *adoration*. The Council of Trent was called in order to meet the urgent wishes of the secular princes of Europe. Many of its members were the mere creatures of the reluctant Court of Rome. Some of them were made bishops for the very purpose of attending, that they might counteract the dreaded work of reformation. Still they were obliged to yield something to the demands of the age. The Protestant preacher was abroad—the press was at work; hence the guarded, and often ambiguous, phraseology of the canons.

3. The schoolmen had no such reasons for reserve and caution; and they broadly contend for the downright adoration of the images—not absolute, of course, or for their own sakes, but relative, because of their connexion with the originals. This view was maintained by St. Thomas Aquinas, Cardinal Cajetan, Bonaventure, &c. Thus, the image of God and Christ was worshipped with *Latria*, that of Mary with *hyperdulia*, and those of the other saints with *dulia*. Now, this is precisely the worship into which the common people are prone to fall. Stupified by ignorance, worn with care and want, oppressed with toil, or degraded by vice, they have rarely an idea above the visible object. Of all their faculties, imagination only is vigorous, and *that* animates the statue or the painting with a present divinity, which is adored with the whole heart, flinging nice casuistical distinctions to the winds. The power with which good representations on canvass impress the minds of the uneducated, is brought before us in a striking manner, by Catlin's most interesting account of the American Indians. They thought the pictures were alive, that a portion of the soul was transfused into them, and that they would haunt them when dead. The tendency of image worship to rest in the visible object is mournfully exemplified in the history of the Church of Rome.

Thus the *Cross*, (supposed to have been found in Jerusalem in 326, in a spot where the good bishop had buried one made for the occasion,) this *true Cross* is worshipped with *Latria*; *i. e.* supremely. “The Cross,” says Thomas Aquinas, “is to be worshipped with *Latria*, which is also to be addressed to Jesus, and his image.” Bossuet admits that St. Thomas thus teaches.* The Roman *Pontifical* declares, that “*Latria* is due to the Cross.” The *Missal*, authorised by Pius, Clement, and Urban, orders “the clergy and laity, on bended knees, to adore the Cross.” The whole choir sing, “Thy Cross we

* Bossuet Œuvres, i. 448.

adore." The *Breviary*, or priests' prayer-book, teaches the same worship:—"Hail, O Cross! our only hope! Increase righteousness to the pious, and bestow pardon on the guilty! Save the present assembly met this day for thy praise! Thy Cross, O Lord, we adore!" All this to the senseless wood, in the fountains of Catholic devotion, one of which all the clergy are compelled to read for an hour and a half daily, under pain of mortal sin! *

The worship of images, like every other corrupting innovation of the dark ages, was commended to the *faithful* by miracles, which were, in those times, as plenty as blackberries. When both Reason and Scripture failed, miracles were always at hand to keep the church out of difficulties, and sanctify a profitable invention. In this case, however, we must admit, that the secular clergy were borne on by the heathenish propensities of the monk-rid people, who must have shows in the church, or would seek them in the pagan temple. A number of silly stories about miraculous images received the sanction of the second Council of Nice. Among these was the fable, that our Lord sent his portrait to Agabus, King of Edessa, an invention of the 6th century, of which, of course, Eusebius says nothing in his history, and which was never heard of for five hundred years! They also certify, that one Arnold saw an image of Mary in Palestine, which turned to flesh. John the Hermit worshipped one of her images which he kept in his cell; and while absent, which was sometimes for three or four months, he left a candle lighting before it, which, strange to say, neither burned out, nor wasted a single inch all the time: and, what is more, the Queen of Heaven,—that is the image,—kept it regularly snuffed!

Roman Catholic writers acknowledge, that the early Christians detested the use of images in worship as a heathenish

* Pont. Rom. 205; Miss. Rom. 157, 158; Brev. Rom. 982, 983; Edgar, c. 15.

abomination. It was unknown among Christians for 300 years ; and when the evil did begin to appear, from a weak compliance with Pagan prejudice, it was condemned by the Council of Elvira, in the beginning of the 4th century. This corruption, like most others, resulted from the subserviency of the church to the state. The empress Constantina sent to Eusebius of Cesarea for an image of Christ, but the bishop returned a noble answer, which leaves no doubt that the church had hitherto held purely Protestant views on this subject. He said that there could be no image of Christ, for "his *deity* has no form, and his humanity is now *glorified*, so that its features could not be painted." Du Pin, Erasmus, and many other eminent Roman writers, acknowledge that the church was without images for three hundred years—admitted to be the purest era of her history.

About this time, Epiphanius tore down an image which he found in one of the churches of his diocese, and his conduct was approved by Jerome. Even Gregory the Great declared, in 601, that images were not placed in churches for worship of any kind, but merely for instruction—but the practice was too agreeable to the half-converted idolaters that now crowded the Christian places of worship,—and it spread rapidly, and as rapidly degenerated into rank idolatry. They treated the saints as they had treated their own demi-gods. The abuse became so palpable and gross, that the emperor Leo, the Isaurean, a reforming prince, who, like most royal reformers, proceeded to work by violence—ordered their demolition. This created a tremendous uproar among the monks—a mighty army rushing forth from their ten thousand cells, in a holy phrensy, instigated by the Pope, who devoutly implored the Lord "to set the devil upon his majesty."

In 754, an Assembly of Greek Bishops met at Constantinople, to the number of 358, and solemnly condemned this grievous corruption. These efforts, to a great extent, succeeded—images were every where demolished ; and what has been

called the heresy of *Iconoclasm*, or image-breaking, spread over Christendom. But Satan was not to be thus defeated. He had a fit instrument prepared in the person of the empress Irene—a female Phocas, who came to prop up orthodoxy in this extremity. This monster had put the eyes out of her own son, and had the tongues cut out of several of the royal family. In order to effect her object in the restoration of idols, she made her secretary a patriarch.

The second Council of Nice assembled; and though it is dignified with the title of Oecumenical, it contained no bishops from Italy, France, Spain, Africa, Germany, or Britain; and all the imperial bribes and menaces could muster only 300, out of 1850 then in the church! Gibbon says this council was a monument of “superstition, ignorance, falsehood, and folly.” Their decrees were condemned in France and England, by both king and clergy. Here, however, is their parting *benediction*—meant, no doubt, to be apostolical:—“*Cursed* be all who do not salute, honour, venerate, *worship*, and *adore* the holy images!—*Cursed* be they who call images idols—*Cursed* be all those who dissent—*Cursed* be all who gainsay,” &c.*

Let it be remembered that the Anglicans are bound by this Council, as being a *General* Council of the *United* Church! Their decrees were enforced by the deposition of clergy and excommunication of laity. Theodora finally established the worship throughout the East, ordering a refractory patriarch to receive 200 lashes! This logic soon settled the question.

The advocates of image worship have referred to Scripture for countenance. Many Protestants are curious to learn how they can get over the Second Commandment, which has been, till of late, and is still in Ireland, excluded from their popular Catechisms. In the first place, they state, that it is only a part of the first, and simply forbids the worship of idols, in opposition to Jehovah. Secondly, they leave it out for brevity

* Labb. viii. 1226; Bin. v. 722.

sake, not to burden the memories of the children. But, if the prohibition of images be a superfluous addition to the First Commandment, and too prolix to be taught to children, it may well be asked, why God wrote it for perpetuity on the tables of stone, which he delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai? Surely it is not too much to teach these two or three sentences to children, when the Catechism is filled with commands of the church—with prayers and forms, the words of man, including “the manner of answering a priest at mass!” The objection that there would be more than ten commandments, if this were counted, and a man’s wife would be classed with his ox or his ass, has no force. We must still ask, what right has any man to take away a portion of God’s law? The tenth commandment is designed simply to forbid *coveting* what belongs to another, without reference to the sinful affection which had been condemned in the seventh commandment, which Roman Catholic divines interpret as comprehending all the desires which issue in the open transgression of that law.

These evasions (for they are nothing else) are pointedly met by Moses in language, which proves at once that the passage under dispute was designed to forbid the worship of JEHOVAH *through the medium of images*; and that such a mode of worshipping even the true God is unacceptable, and has a most pernicious tendency, leading directly to the grossest idolatry. “*Take ye, therefore, good heed to yourselves; for ye saw NO MANNER OF SIMILITUDE on the day that the Lord spoke unto you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire: lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female.*” * A more daring violation of the divine law was never perpetrated, than that of which the Church of Rome has been guilty, in the religious use, or rather abuse, of images!

An argument in their favour is drawn from the *cherubim* in

* Deut. iv. 15, 16.

the Temple; but Aquinas himself admits that they were "not put there to be *worshipped*." Indeed, this is obvious enough, for they were put in the most holy place, which was never entered by any but the High Priest, and that only once a year. He did not render them any sort of worship. The people never saw them, nor even the priests.

Gregory II. compared Leo the Emperor to *Ozias*, whom his Holiness ignorantly represented as wickedly breaking the brazen serpent; the infallible guide not knowing that this was the good King Hezekiah, who lived eighty-four years after his great grandfather; and did what was "right in the sight of the Lord," when he broke a divinely-appointed emblem, because it had been abused to the purposes of superstition. The Pope seems never to have read the Old Testament. He represents David as bringing the serpent with the holy ark into the *Temple*, which was not built till after his death! * This serpent, like the cross, was the symbol of a great deliverance; but, instead of stirring up the peoples' minds by way of remembrance, it became, like the cross, an object of worship. The children of Israel "burned incense to it." † Therefore this pious king broke it in pieces. He did what was right in the sight of the Lord. If Roman Catholics did likewise, what loads of holy lumber would be borne out of their chapels! I hope to see the day when, in many a district, they will make a great bonfire of their crosses and images. Meantime, Protestants should cease to encourage them by setting up the cross on their churches, making the sign of it on children in baptism, and by other unaccountable anomalies in a Reformed Church. The Presbyterians of Scotland have also their *saints'* churches with *crosses* on their steeples. "These things ought not so to be!"

The only other *argument* which Roman advocates attempt

* Greg. in Labb. viii. 658; Bin v. 505; Apud Edgar, p. 425.

† 2 Kings, xviii. 4.

to bring from Scripture is, that Jacob worshipped the *top* of his staff, which they suppose was surmounted with a little image of the Messiah, long before he was born! * Our translation of the passage is, that he worshipped "*leaning* on the top of his staff," a very natural position for an aged man. The word *leaning*, indeed, is not in the original; but it is evidently implied. Paul quotes from the Septuagint, which has "staff" instead of "bed." In the Vulgate, *the very incident* referred to by him is thus mentioned:—"Adoravit Israel DEUM, conversus ad lectuli caput." † "Israel worshipped God, turned towards the head of the bed." Thus, in one place the authorised Bible of the Church of Rome represents Jacob as worshipping God; in another, this act is worshipping the top of his staff, from which it is easy to demonstrate the deity of this same staff!

The literal rendering of both, Paul and the Seventy, is—"Jacob worshipped *on* (ἐπι) the top of his staff." The meaning of this, of course, is, that he adored God in that position, when blessing the sons of Joseph. I believe, however, that the Vulgate version of the Hebrew is the true one; and that Paul quoted from the Greek, not meaning to sanction all its renderings, but for convenience, because it was best known to his readers. On this subject, Protestants have all the Jewish critics in their favour. Aquilla, Symmachus, and Onkelos, agree with us. We can also claim Origen, Jerome, Augustine, Theoderet, the best translators, and a Parisian Council in 824.

Thus have we found this practice utterly without foundation in Scripture, and always tending to the most grievous abuses. Images are, indeed, the "books of the ignorant"—their readers never grow wiser. Children love pictures too, and those who worship them "are children in understanding." In every country where they have prevailed, and where the

* Heb. xi. 21.

† Gen. lxvii. 31.

people were left to their teaching, they have covered the land with darkness and superstition. "The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commands all men every where to REPENT."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH—INFANT BAPTISM—THE PROCESSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

It is constantly urged by Roman Catholics and their Anglican imitators, that we have no authority, but that of tradition and the church, for keeping the Sabbath on the first day of the week, and for infant baptism. They also assert, that the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father *and the Son*, rests solely on a decision of the infallible church. Now, as the Bible only is the standard of the Protestant faith, and as we are bound to render a *Scriptural* reason for all that we believe and practise in religion, I shall devote a few pages to the examination of these points, anxious that nothing should be left undone to satisfy the honest objections of my Roman Catholic readers.

I.—THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

Some contend that the Sabbath was merely a part of the Jewish law, and that, with that economy, its obligation has been for ever abolished. Others, that we have no authority for meeting to worship on the first day of the week, but that of the Church of Rome. I shall prove both these positions to be false.

1. We may justly infer the perpetual obligation of the Sabbath from *its objects and utility*. So long as man continues to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, he will need a periodical day of rest. Bowed down with toil, oppressed with anxiety, engrossed with worldly cares and vexations,—how miserable would be his lot without some frequently recurring season of relief and repose! Without a Sabbath, not only would civilization make no progress,—it would retrograde. Christians would sink into savages. “Cleanliness is next to godliness;” but it would be a virtue almost unknown among peasants and mechanics, if the sound of the church-going bell did not summon them to their weekly oblations ere they appeared in public, in presence of their neighbours, to cultivate mutual esteem and self-respect. Where this is neglected, the working classes rapidly deteriorate in physical comfort and personal appearance. The weekly meeting of neighbours of all ranks and classes, cultivates those feelings and habits most favourable to social order; and sustains public opinion, which is stronger to protect it, than political laws or municipal regulations.

When you add to this arrangement the public worship of God, with the meditations, reflections, and studies to which it so solemnly, and yet so cheerfully calls us, awakening gratitude for the past, and trust for the future,—renewing the sense of responsibility to God and duty to man,—while the voice of eternal Truth conveys lessons of divine wisdom suited to every condition of life,—encouraging the humble, and warning the proud,—you have a provision for the moral improvement of mankind, which, apart from the salvation of souls, is of the highest importance to society. If this was so in Patriarchal and Jewish times, why not under the Christian economy? Does not society need it as much in this age of all-absorbing business,—of quenchless thirst for gain,—of materialising tendencies multiplied on every side,—when the pastoral life of the Orientals is exchanged for the bustle of commerce, for the

smoke and confinement of factories, and for the fermentation of immorality in crowded and unventilated populations?

2. Indeed the Sabbath rests on a law antecedent to the Mosaic, and altogether independent of that national and symbolical economy. It will be admitted, that *marriage* is a divine institution, coeval and coextensive in its obligation with the human race. It was ordained in paradise, and it seems essential to the civilization, if not the very existence, of society. The same may be said of the Sabbath. The Creator blessed the seventh portion of time in every week, set it apart for rest and worship, and enjoined its observance on the *whole* human race. For how could any branch of it escape the obligation imposed on the common parents of all? When our Lord declares, that the Sabbath was made for "man," and not man for the Sabbath, does he not mean for *mankind*? And if so, how could it have been appointed for the Jews only, a very small fraction of mankind? No one can account for the division of time into *weeks*, which was found pervading the heathen world, on any other principle than that it was handed down to every tribe by our first parents, who received it from God.

3. It is true, the law was re-issued on Sinai, accompanied by sanctions of a temporal nature, suited to the genius of that theocracy, and by a round of ritual observances characteristic of the economy with which it was now associated. The people had kept the Sabbath in the wilderness before they came to Sinai; and that it was no new institution, now ordained for the first time, is clear from the fact, that they were called on to *remember* it. These *ceremonial adjuncts*, and *national circumstances*, were no essential part of the pre-existent institution. They were merely its drapery—a new costume suited to the times. This had grown old, and was cast off, as out of fashion, when CHRIST came; and to *this* the word *positive* strictly applies. Marriage is an institution ordained of God, independent of *all the forms* in which it may be celebrated;—

and why should not the same principle be applied to the Sabbath?

Moreover, the distinction between *positive* and *moral* laws may be carried to a dangerous extent. Is the law regarding marriage in the *Decalogue*, a moral law, founded in the nature of things, and *eternally* unchangeable? It is a *temporary* law suited to man, in a very brief period of his existence; for "in heaven they neither marry nor are given in marriage." The rights of property, too, are conventional, and are modified, restrained, or withheld in a thousand ways, by human laws, and yet the Decalogue says, Thou shalt not steal—*Thou shalt not covet*. These laws were engraven by God himself on tables of stone for perpetuity,—and why should not the Sabbath be perpetual as well as they?

The substance of the moral law is expressed in a few words—love to God, and love to man. The former comprising the first table, the latter the second;—and we may ask, Was it without design that the law of the Sabbath was placed between? How can men love their neighbour unless they love God? And how can they love God without worshipping him? And how can his worship be maintained on earth without the Sabbath? In fact, not only religion, but morality, depends very much on this institution. It may be regarded as a pillar, on which they are suspended, to be read by all the world. Without it they might, and possibly would, in the progress of some ages, perish from the earth.

4. When our Saviour said, that he was "Lord even of the Sabbath," he meant only that he appointed it, and could change the *time* and *mode* of its observance. He could not have so spoken of a *defunct*, or expiring Jewish law; for he is "not the God of the *dead*, but of the *LIVING*." The institution did not die,—it only cast off its ancient dress, surviving still, with more blessed influence, as *THE LORD'S DAY*.* We are told, that not one jot or tittle of the law would be abolished till all

should be *fulfilled*. But the end and objects of the Sabbath had not been fulfilled when the Temple fell; nor will they ever while man remains in his present state. The conclusion is obvious; it is perpetually binding, till superseded by the Sabbath-keeping of Heaven.

It would seem, also, that it was foreseen by the ancient prophets as a part of this dispensation, and as a remembrancer of our Lord's resurrection, and the new creation that followed. (See Isaiah lvi. 6—8.) The "holy mountain" refers to the Christian Church, where was to be "a house of prayer for *all* people;" and, in connexion with this, great stress is laid on the observance of the Sabbath. In Psalm cxviii. 24, this day of rest and rejoicing is immediately associated with the resurrection,* as if the prophet had an intimation of the change to the first day of the week. This part of the subject will now demand our attention.

The reader will keep in mind the distinction between an institution and its circumstantial, as in the case of marriage and the Lord's Supper. The blessing of the last mentioned ordinance is not tied to any specific *time*. It was instituted on a Friday evening; it is celebrated on a Sunday morning. It was observed by the Apostles weekly; it has been observed by various churches yearly, half-yearly, quarterly, monthly, weekly, daily. By none of them all, I believe, has the Apostolic mode of administration been rigidly adhered to. While the Sabbath was bound up in the Jewish economy, the ceremonial law was precise as to time, &c. But when the hallowed day was brought out from its Jewish appendages, and surrounded by evangelical associations, its observance at once partook of the free, untechnical, informal, expansive, catholic, joyful, spiritual genius of Christianity. A day whose sacredness depended absolutely on the hours, could never have been observed with any rational certainty of advantage by *all nations*. When we are in the

* It was then the rejected stone was made head corner-stone; for then Jesus was "declared to be the Son of God with power." Rom. i. 4.

house of God adoring, our antipodes in the South seas, with their missionary teachers, are asleep; and *vice versa*. There is a variation of the time all round the globe. All the law requires is, that the seventh portion of our time should be devoted to relief from labour and to religious improvement; and we have the most satisfactory reasons for regarding this portion as now the first day of every week.

1. On that day our blessed Redeemer arose from the dead, brought life and immortality to light, and gladdened the world with the morning beams of a new creation—a moral creation, displaying a power, and wisdom, and goodness, and a glory, more astonishing and resplendent than those which the sons of God celebrated at the beginning. Was it not meet that this day should be a holy festival for ever? Should not this blissful event, which filled heaven with new raptures, and sent a thrill of hope through our guilty world, be kept in perpetual remembrance by the holy convocations of the people of God? “For behold I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered nor come in mind.”* (Isaiah lxxv. 17.)

Again, the New Jerusalem was founded—the church was consecrated as a new society, destined to fill the earth, on the first day of the week: for then came down the Holy Spirit, touching with celestial fire the lips of the Apostles, that they might go forth to fulfil their great commission. We are not, however, left to our own sense of fitness in this matter, any more than to the traditions of the Church. We follow *apostolic precedent*, and thus follow the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

2. We have the clearest Scriptural proof, that the Apostles, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and guided by their risen Saviour—who remained forty days on earth, instructing them in the things regarding the kingdom of God,—kept the first day of the week holy, instead of the last. The disciples were

* That is, comparatively speaking. *Both* are celebrated, but the glory of the latter excelleth.

assembled on the day of the resurrection, when the Lord appeared to them. “And after eight days again, his disciples were within, and Thomas with them; then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.”* The great Apostle of the Gentiles remained a week at Troas, that he might spend the Sabbath with the brethren there. “And upon the *first day* of the week, when the disciples *came together to break bread*, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight.”† He was ready to depart on the morrow,—as if he with difficulty remained over the first day of the week, when the disciples assembled from the surrounding districts to attend the Lord’s Supper, as they were, no doubt, accustomed to do.

This fact is further intimated by the same Apostle, in his Epistle to the Corinthians. “Now concerning the *collection* for the saints, as *I have given order to the churches of Galatia*, even so do ye. Upon the *first day* of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.”‡ The first day of the week, then, was the day of rest and worship with the Apostles and disciples; and accordingly, it came to be familiarly known as *the Lord’s Day*—the day on which John was favoured with his Apocalyptic vision. || Reflect a moment on this designation. Does not the phrase—“the Lord’s Supper,” mark that feast as sacred and peculiar—as an ordinance totally separated in its object and associations from all common meals? The affirmative will be at once admitted: and does not the phrase—“the Lord’s Day,” in like manner mark out one day in particular, as *consecrated to Him* for a perpetual and joyful celebration of his redeeming victories? This could not be the Jewish Sabbath, during which he lay bound in the grave, and which, with his followers, could only awaken mournful recollections. It must be the day on which he triumphantly rose from the dead—the day on which his Spirit was sent down in tongues

* John xx. 1, 19, 26. † Acts xx. 7. ‡ 1 Cor. xvi. 2. || Rev. i. 10.

of fire on the church—the day on which the Apostolic churches were accustomed to assemble for worship, and to commemorate the Redeemer's dying love. Yes;—"this is the day which the LORD hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it."*

Besides all this, we have satisfactory historical testimony, that the *primitive* churches, from the days of the Apostles downwards, continued to worship on the first day of the week, as the stated and divinely appointed day of rest. This testimony is furnished by Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Pliny, and others, and is valuable as a corroboration of the conclusions fairly deduced from the written code of our holy religion. This is not *tradition*, in the ordinary sense of that word. We rely on the authority of Ignatius, Justin Martyr, &c., just as a judge relies on the authority of a witness who confirms statements established sufficiently already. But, if it be said, that this supplementary evidence shows how the essential statements had been understood and acted on, and, therefore, we should obey the *dicta* of the witnesses;—we reply, that one of these witnesses is Pliny, a heathen, and an enemy, who testifies that the Christians met to worship Christ as God, on the first day of the week; and we are inclined to lay more stress on his statements than on those of the Fathers in this matter. Does it follow from this, that we pin our faith on the sleeve of Pliny? The reader may learn from this, the difference between historical testimony and traditions. We admit the early Fathers as witnesses of facts and observances existing in their days; but not as the unerring channels of an unwritten revelation. Such is our authority for keeping the Sabbath on the first day of the week. We no more think of looking to the Pope in the matter, than we think of looking to the emperor of China!

II.—INFANT BAPTISM.

It is not my intention (for this is not the place) to go into a discussion of this subject: but as the Roman and Anglican

* Psalm cxviii. 24.

Catholics contend that we have only *Church* authority for baptizing infants, we wish to set them right as to a matter of fact; and beg to assure them, that we would never baptise an infant, if we were not convinced that we have a Scriptural warrant for the practice. Whether our opponents may regard that warrant as sufficient or not, is another question. We merely wish to show them that we do not rely on the Church.

Protestants baptise infants because they believe that baptism takes the place of circumcision, as a symbolical and initiatory rite, representing the needful purification of the soul. As the Jewish rite belonged to infants, so, we think, does the Christian. For no intimation whatever of the withdrawal of the privilege from children, was given either by Christ or his Apostles. Had children been excluded from this outward sign of covenanted blessings, it would undoubtedly have given a shock to the feelings and religious sympathies of parents,—would have excited objections, discussions, and observations, disparaging to Christianity, which the Apostles would have met and answered in their discourses and letters; but there is not the least hint to that effect in the whole New Testament. Children, therefore, must have been received on the same footing that they had been, or some notice must have been taken of such a complete revolution in regard to them. There is nothing whatever in the New Testament, intimating that they were debarred from the privileges so freely accorded to them under the Abrahamic covenant. But there is much to show, that they were recognised as fully under the Christian economy as ever they had been before. This is to be inferred—

1. From the conduct of our LORD himself.—“And he took a child and set him in the midst of them; and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, Whosoever shall receive one of such children, in *my name*, receiveth me.” Compare this language with the following:—“Whosoever shall give you a cup of cold water in my name, *because ye belong to Christ*, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.”

To receive such children then, is to receive them as disciples, "because they belong to Christ." "Then were brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. But JESUS said, Suffer little children and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them and departed thence." Mark adds:—"He took them in his arms and blessed them."*

Now, as these infants belonged to believing Jews, having a deep-rooted conviction that their children should be "clean" as well as themselves,—and as our Lord's conduct in thus affectionately blessing them, and blessing those also who should receive such in his name, as *His*, must be regarded as giving the most unqualified sanction to that conviction, instead of correcting it,—we conceive that we are fully warranted from Scripture, in bringing our infants to Christ. And how can this be done so solemnly, and with such a feeling of responsibility regarding their salvation, as in the instructive and impressive rite of Baptism? Moreover, when Peter said to the Jews, "Repent and be *baptised* every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, &c.—For the promise is unto you, and to your *children*,"†—all the prepossessions of his hearers must have led to the conclusion, that the initiatory emblem of the New Covenant blessings belonged to their little ones as well as to themselves. If this impression (so natural under the circumstances, that we must regard it as quite unavoidable!) had been false, and consequently, in a very high degree pernicious,—*now* was the time for Peter to explain the important change in the Divine procedure, regarding the children of believers. Had a revolution, to Jewish parents so violent and painful, been at this time effected,—how is it possible that it could have been accomplished in perfect silence on the part of the teachers, and without a murmur of objection on the part of their disciples?

* Mark ix. 36; Matt. xix. 13—15.

† Acts ii. 38, 39.

2. But this remark leads me to the conduct of the *Apostles* in this matter. It cannot be denied, that they baptised what are called *whole houses, households, or families*; but as infants are not expressly mentioned, it is argued that they were *excluded*. It strikes me that this is a *non-sequitur*. The burden of proof lies on the other side. The opponents of infant baptism are bound to demonstrate, that though the Apostles were accustomed to baptise “whole households,”* on the faith of their heads, they did not baptise young children. Of this, the daily custom of the Apostles, of course, only a few instances are mentioned. In order to evade the force of our appeal to this unquestionable custom, either of two things must be established:—First, that *all* the parents baptised by the Apostles in the whole course of their ministry were *childless*—that though they had families, they had no children!—Or, secondly, that their children were in every case excluded,—and that the ceremony was confined to those who were capable of believing, and who made a confession of their faith. The former supposition needs no refutation;—the latter point should be supported by the most resistless proofs, in order to meet the difficulties already suggested,—namely, the pre-existent privileges of the children of church members,—the absence of any notice whatever that these privileges were withdrawn, and that our little ones have so far suffered from the introduction of a dispensation of all-embracing mercy,—that they must be considered as unclean aliens among us, till they give proofs of actual faith and conversion,—the total inconsistency of our gracious Redeemer’s words and actions with such an ungrateful notion,—and the unaccountable fact, that no mention is made of any such exclusion in the Acts of the Apostles. I maintain, therefore, the proofs should be most cogent, that the ancient law given to Abraham and Moses has been repealed, not only as to the forms and circumstances of its administration, but as to its

* Acts xi. 14.

principle and *spirit*. Besides, we must have a formal, clear, explicit enactment, that infants are *not* to be received into the visible community of Christians by the symbolic rite of Baptism, and that they were *expressly shut out* by the Apostles, when, as their custom was, they thus ceremonially purified whole families! But here, where the evidence should amount to demonstration, we have not the smallest particle of proof! Is it not then, I respectfully and humbly ask—is it not a fearful responsibility that a minister incurs, when he (as far as in him lies) excludes from the kingdom of God on earth, such as CHRIST received and blessed; and such as HE declared belong to that kingdom;—imitating the very conduct of the disciples, to whom their more sympathising Master said, “Suffer little children and forbid them not to come unto me?” How can a minister forbid a believer’s children to come to Christ, but by refusing to baptise them?

It appears to me, that a fatal objection to this child-excluding system, arises out of the Apostolic practice of baptising households. In the immersion of households, our Baptist brethren (towards whom the author cherishes the kindest feelings) very properly demand the evidence of saving faith in every person who presents himself:—he answers for himself, and is received into the church on his *own* confession and responsibility,—and not on those of either parent or master. Undoubtedly the Apostles dealt with *adults* on the same rational and Christian principle. Nothing is more emphatically enforced in the New Testament, than every man’s personal accountability to his Master and Father in heaven. It was appealed to and roused to action even in the bosoms of *slaves*. No man was encouraged or allowed to answer for the soul of one whose age and capacity enabled him to answer for his own. How then, *on this principle*, can those who deny that infant baptism is Scriptural, account for the general practice of the Apostles in baptising *households* on the faith of their *heads*? For instance, when Lydia believed, her household were all baptised;—it was

so with the jailor of Philippi and others. Now if these families consisted entirely of *adults*, whether relatives or slaves, why are they not spoken of as principals—as able to answer for themselves—as spiritually independent, and responsible only to God? Nothing can be much clearer to me, than that these households consisted principally of persons, who from their tender age and other circumstances, were *dependent* for their religious training and guidance on those who were their heads, and whose profession of faith furnished a guarantee that they would be properly instructed in the doctrines of the Gospel, to which instruction, baptism is the divinely appointed initiation. It would even appear, that where only one of the parents had embraced Christianity, their infant offspring were baptised. No other interpretation of the following passage seems worthy of a moment's attention:—"For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else, were your *children unclean*, but now are they *holy*."* This holiness is either moral or ceremonial. If moral, its subject was surely fit for baptism; if ceremonial, it must imply, either that, unlike the offspring of heathens, the children in question were entitled to baptism, or had actually been baptised.

3. I have thus shown, that in the matter of infant baptism, Protestants are not dependent on Church authority, but are guided by the law and the testimony. For my part, I would renounce the practice without the least hesitation, if it were not, in my deliberate judgment, fairly deduced from the express words or obvious principles of the New Testament, as illustrated by the practice of its inspired authors. It remains only to show, that historical testimony (not the authority of tradition, still less the authority of Rome, whom no Protestant ever dreams of consulting in matters of this kind) is clear and decided in favour of the prevalence of infant baptism from the days of the Apostles. As this testimony has been collected

† 1 Cor. vii 14.

and brought into a small compass by Dwight, I shall transcribe it from his luminous pages :—

“ Justin Martyr, born near the close of the first century, observes, when speaking of those who were members of the church, that ‘a part of these were sixty or seventy years old, who were made disciples of Christ from their *infancy*.’ But there never was any other mode of making disciples from infancy, except baptism. Iræneus, born about the year 97, a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of John, says, ‘Christ came to save all persons, who by him are born again unto God; infants, and little ones, and children, and youths, and elder persons.’ By being born again, Iræneus intends being baptised, as he elsewhere clearly shows. Clemens Alexandrinus, born about the middle of the second century, says, ‘If any one be a fisherman, let him think of an Apostle and the *children* taken out of the water.’ This furnishes a decisive proof, that in Clemens’ view, the Apostles baptised infants, and that this practice was in his own time the general practice of the Christian church. Origen, born about the year 184, says, ‘Infants are baptised for the remission of sins.’ And again, ‘The church hath received the tradition from the Apostles, that baptism ought to be administered to infants.’ Cyprian, who was contemporary with Origen, says, ‘that sixty-six bishops being convened in council at Carthage, having the question referred to them, whether infants might be baptised before they were eight days old, decided unanimously, that no infant is to be prohibited from the benefit of baptism, though but just born.’ Augustine says, ‘The whole church practises infant baptism; it was not instituted by councils, but was always in use.’ He also says, that ‘he did not remember ever to have read of any person, whether Catholic or heretic, who maintained that baptism ought to be denied to infants.’ This, he says, the church has always maintained.”

Pelagius, a contemporary with Augustine, an inquisitive and learned man, who was born in Britain, and travelled through

France, Italy, Africa Proper, and Egypt, to Jerusalem, declares, that "he had never heard even any impious heretic, who asserted that infants are not to be baptised;" and asks, "Who then can be so impious as to hinder the baptism of infants?"

I will only add to these witnesses of the practice prevailing in their own times respectively, a reflection that has occurred to myself. It is well known, that, at a very early age of the Church, the Lord's Supper was given to infants, especially in Africa. Of course, these infant communicants had been previously baptised. In closing this part of my subject, I beg to say, that I have introduced these remarks, not from any love for this peculiar controversy, for I never meddle with it, nor from any wish to offend my Baptist readers, but simply to show Roman Catholics, that the Bible and the Bible only, is the creed of every true Protestant.

III.—THE PROCESSION OF THE HOLY GHOST.

THOUGH no genuine Protestant feels his conscience bound by the metaphysical definitions of the Nicene and Athanasian creeds, and therefore, I am not called to prove the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son as so defined, yet I am ready to show, that even on this point the catechism of the Council of Trent has nothing surer than Scripture to rely on. Let it suffice, then, to quote a page from that standard of orthodoxy:—"The faithful are to be taught, that the Holy Ghost proceeds by eternal procession from the Father and the Son, as from one principle; a truth propounded to us by an ecclesiastical rule, from which the least departure is unwarrantable,—confirmed by the authority of the sacred Scriptures, and defined by the councils of the church." The "ecclesiastical rule" is not quoted,—neither are we favoured with the decrees of councils. If the reader can find the "*eternal* procession from the Father and the Son, as from *one principle*," in the following texts—the only authorities adduced by the

compilers of this standard Catechism, then I have no objection to his receiving it.—“Christ himself, speaking of the Holy Ghost, says, ‘He shall glorify me because he shall receive of mine;’ and we also find, that the Holy Ghost is sometimes called in Scripture the ‘Spirit of Christ,’ sometimes the ‘Spirit of the Father;’—is one time said to be sent by the Father, another time by the Son; thus signifying in *unequivocal terms*, that he proceeds alike from the Father and the Son. ‘He,’ says St. Paul, ‘who has not the Spirit of Christ, belongs not to him.’ In his Epistle to the Galatians, he calls the Holy Ghost the Spirit of Christ. ‘God,’ says he, ‘hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.’ In the Gospel of St. Matthew, he is called the Spirit of the Father. ‘It is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.’ And our Lord himself said at his last supper, ‘When the Paraclete cometh, whom I will *send*—the Spirit of Truth who *proceedeth* from the Father, he shall give testimony of me.’ On another occasion he declares, that he is to be *sent* by the Father:—‘Whom,’ says he, ‘the Father will send in my name.’ Understanding by these words the procession of the Holy Ghost, we come to the inevitable conclusion, that he proceeds from the Father and the Son.”

Now, I submit, that the Council of Trent and the creed-mongers that went before in the Eastern Church, had no right to understand an incomprehensible “eternal procession” from two persons as from “one principle,” as taught by these words. They mean, simply, that when the Holy Spirit came down to abide with the church on the day of Pentecost, he *came from* the Father and Son, being *sent* by them conjointly, to carry on the work of redemption in the hearts of men; and refer to a mission in time, not to a procession from eternity. If the Council of Trent finds the Word of God “unequivocal” on a point so mysterious, we may well trust it in matters that come more within the reach of the human understanding.

CHAPTER XXII.

FAITH AND WORKS.

THE Apostle Paul declares, and the Council of Trent agrees with him, “that without faith, it is impossible to please God.” But the general principle is applied by Paul to cases where the Church of Rome is not so ready to admit it. For instance, he shows very clearly, that without faith it is impossible to be reconciled to God, while *with* faith it is quite possible. “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.”* By faith, the repentant rebel is pardoned,—is converted from a foreigner to a citizen,—from an alien to a child,—from a slave to an heir—an heir of God, and a joint-heir of Christ! How glorious is the grace that effects all this! “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, with the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.”†

Again, he that comes to God must believe that he is the rewarder of all them that diligently seek him; but he must come in the right way. Jesus says, “No man cometh to the Father but by me;”—and “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” To come to God then, acceptably, we must exercise faith, not only in the atonement, but in the intercession of Christ. And this faith must be *exclusive*—confined to Him alone, and extended to “no other name under heaven.”‡

* Rom. v. 1. † Titus iii. 5. ‡ John xiv. 6; Acts iv. 12.

Without faith we cannot keep the commandments. "Faith works by love," and love is the fulfilling of the law." We must not only admit, that Christian love springs from faith, but contend that it can spring from nothing else. No branch can bring forth fruit unless it abide in Christ; but by faith only is it engrafted in the true Vine. When you meet a limpid stream without a spring, then may you hope to see a life of holiness separate from the healing fountain of faith. When Paul speaks of the converted Gentiles, he does not ascribe their sanctity to baptism, or to apostolic absolutions, or works of penance, but declares that God put no difference between them and the Jews, "*purifying their hearts by faith.*" He was sent to preach the Gospel to all nations, that they might have "an inheritance among them that are *sanctified by faith.*"*

The church which speaks seldom and coldly of justification by faith, cannot be Apostolic, unless to uphold its own system, it would try to introduce a schism among the Apostles, and say with the Corinthians, I am of James—I am of Peter. If the Spirit spoke by Paul, then is faith most fundamental and vital in Christianity. But we shall see just now, that the Apostles are not divided on this question. Their Master declared emphatically, "He that believeth not shall be damned,"†—and they all echo that awful truth. Again and again does John declare, that "whosoever believeth in Christ shall not perish, but have everlasting life," and "shall be raised up at the last day." This was the disciple whom Jesus most especially loved;—a man of a gentle and tender spirit, the last to deal in gratuitous denunciations;—and yet he does not scruple to declare—"He that believeth not is condemned already;"—"and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Had John or Peter addressed the jailor of Philippi, when agonized with a sense of guilt and danger, would he not have exclaimed with Paul,—“Believe on the

* Acts xv. 9; xxvi. 18.

† Mark xvi. 16.

Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Paul declares that the Gospel is the power of God to salvation, to every one that *believeth*,"—that "with the heart man *believeth* unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation,"—and that "the just shall live by faith." Peter's language amounts to the same thing. According to him, we are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation,"—that imperishable principle, more precious than gold, by which we are born again—by which our hearts are purified,—and by which we learn to love one another with a pure heart fervently. He adds a remarkable warning :—"Unto you therefore who believe, he is precious ; but unto them who are disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner ; and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence, even to them who stumble at the word, being disobedient."*

Every representation of faith in Scripture, shows that it is essential to salvation. "This is the work of God, that ye *believe* on Him whom he hath sent."† It is compared to the *looking* of the dying Israelites on the brazen serpent that healed them ;—it is the *eating* and *drinking* by which the desires of the soul are satisfied,—the rod that brings streams from the spiritual Rock that follows us,—the hand that receives the blessing,—the root of hope and charity,—the cord that binds the soul in the bundle of life.

This heavenly principle, then, is not to be slighted or disparaged : it has a meaning and an office ; and I shall now prove that this office is—first, to *justify*, and then to *sanctify*.

We are justified by faith without the works of the law.—By this I mean, that our works, let them be ever so good, or spiritual, or disinterested, or pure, have nothing whatever to do with our justification before God ; which depends solely and exclusively on the merits of Christ. I mean not to go into any

* John iii. 15, 16, 36 ; Acts xvi. 31 ; Rom. i. 6 ; x. 9 ; 1 Peter i. 5, 9.

† John vi. 29.

examination of what theologians have written on this subject, on either side, but simply to ascertain and enforce what the LORD saith.

In Romans the Spirit speaketh expressly, that “by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.” But this, say some, refers only to the ceremonial, not to the moral law. This notion is quite incorrect; for the Apostle first draws a frightful picture of human depravity, which he finishes by saying—“There is no fear of God before their eyes.” He then declares absolutely, that “by deeds of law (law in general, of which sin is the transgression) no flesh shall be justified; for by law (not *the* law) is the knowledge of sin.” The law by which we have the knowledge of sin cannot be a mere law of ceremonies—a set of carnal ordinances,—for of *such* laws, Paul speaks in quite a different manner. The law here referred to as convicting the conscience, is the holy, just, and good law, which not only takes cognizance of outward acts, but penetrates to the inmost desires,—and says to the proud Pharisee, so precise in ceremonial observances, that he had not known sin, if this spiritual sword had not pierced his heart,—“*Thou shalt not covet.*”

Hence, “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God;”—“being justified *freely* by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” “Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith.” A law like the Roman, that allowed justification by works, would not exclude boasting, but sanction it. Why should not a man glory in what he merits—in the reward which he has earned—the trophies he has won? The law of faith forbids all this. No flesh shall glory in God’s presence. Every mouth must be stopped, and all the world become guilty before him. For “to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of *grace*, but of *debt*. But to him that worketh *not*, but believeth in Him that justifieth the *ungodly*, his *faith* is counted for righteousness.” “And if by grace, then it is no more of

works, otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace, otherwise work is no more work.”*

According to this demonstrative reasoning of the Apostle, salvation must be either by grace or works. Between these two modes there is an essential difference. They cannot exist together. There is a mutual repugnance between them. The one destroys the other. If a man be saved by works, he may boast,—he has merit,—his reward is reckoned “a debt,” and he can claim it as such, otherwise work is not work, and the nature of things is changed. This method of salvation, to which human nature clings so fondly, Paul condemns in every possible form, as the inveterate antagonist of the Gospel; and argues on the other hand from reason, as well as teaches from revelation,—“that we are justified *freely by grace*”—that the hitherto “ungodly” are accepted as holy, in virtue of their faith in Christ,—that *His* merit alone is regarded by the Judge in the acquittal of the sinner,—“Therefore it is of faith, *that it might be by grace.*”

“Do we then make void the law by faith?” Do we loosen the bonds of moral obligation? Do we weaken the motives to love and fear God? Do we lessen the inducements to holy obedience? Do we give a license to sin, and cover transgression with impunity? “God forbid!—Yea, we establish the law.” We enlist in its favour the mighty principles of gratitude for the past, and trust for the future;—the confidence of success which ensures the victory;—the hope of glory, which elevates the heart to its own sublimity, and refines it to its own celestial purity. Faith casts out from the soul the slavish fear by which it was tormented and debilitated; and animates it with that filial love which counts no duty a task, and feels happy only in the spontaneous fulfilment of a gracious Father’s will!

We see how this principle wrought in Abraham: he believed and was accepted before he was circumcised. His faith was

* See Romans 3d & 4th chapters throughout; and chap. xi. 6.

imputed, or placed to his account for righteousness. Then at once followed the blessedness of him whose iniquities are pardoned, and the self-devoting spirit which true faith has ever inspired,—so different from the monkish devices by which men seek to purchase the divine favour. There was no will-worship—no self-devoted sacrificing in Abraham's conduct,—as if God did not know how to appoint the proper trials for his children, and allowed them to lay suicidal hands on their own faith. The faith of Abraham was shown in obedience to Jehovah's express command. It was not to perform a self-imposed pilgrimage, and gain a fancied indulgence, that he left his home and his father's land and sojourned in a strange country. It was not to propitiate an offended God that he bound his only son on the altar, and grasped the immolating knife in his trembling hand, He stood ready to do the fearful deed that would seem to nullify the promise which he nevertheless believed should be fulfilled,—persuaded that He whom he served was able to raise him from the dead, from which he received him in a figure.

Now this obedience of the patriarch was full in the Apostle's view, when he declared, that a man is justified “without the works of the law;” and he brings forward this very case as an illustration, to show—first, how faith reconciles us to our Creator, and then how it works in the regenerate heart. With what constancy it sustained Abraham in all his protracted trials! With what undying zeal it fired the heart of Paul! I say nothing of the Reformers, Martyrs, and Missionaries of modern times,—whose labours and sufferings have never been surpassed, though this doctrine was the mainspring of their indomitable energies.

These reflections will dispose us to perceive the harmony between Paul and James on this subject. Paul was opposing a pernicious principle, which was then in high repute among the Jews, and had eaten away all life out of their church. To this he brought all his powers of invincible argument, and all

the authority of his inspiration. But, though he showed the holy influence of faith in an immense variety of particulars, examples, and illustrations, throughout all his epistles, still were his statements wrested, his doctrines perverted, and the grace of God by him set forth, turned into licentiousness. Such is the tendency of the unrenewed heart to extremes. It will convert the medicine of life into the instrument of death. If it cannot be justified by the law, it refuses to obey it. Thus was produced the Antinomian heresy—"that thick-skinned monster of the ooze and mire, which no weapon can pierce, no discipline can tame;"*—whose heart feels no gratitude for redeeming mercy,—whose eyes shed no tears of gracious repentance.

James saw this evil rising among professors, and seeking to shelter itself behind Paul's doctrine of justification; and to dislodge it from that position, and show the folly of its subterfuges, he made the remarks in his epistle, which would never have occasioned much controversy, if one passage had been properly translated:—"What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man *say* he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?" I answer, that faith *can* save him—and nothing but *faith*! But, is not this to contradict James? By no means. James has not been properly translated. He does not say that faith—that is, true faith, cannot save a man, but only that a certain kind of faith cannot do it. In the question put by James, a word is dropped by the translators, which totally changes its meaning:—"Can *that* (ñ) faith save him?" Certainly not. If he *say* he has faith, and have not charity, or works, he deceives himself and the truth is not in him. A faith that is *alone* never saved any man; and yet it is true that a man is saved by faith *only*! Is not this a distinction without a difference? Attend a moment and I will show you that the two things are distinct as the north and south poles. A man is saved by faith only—that is, nothing that he can do or suffer can contribute in the least degree to his justification before God;—he is pardoned

* Robert Hall.

and accepted solely because he believes in Christ, and entirely on the ground of the divine merit in which he thus confides, to the utter exclusion of works wrought before or after. Thus he is saved by faith. But what sort of faith? A naked, fruitless, dead faith? Not at all! Paul never so taught, neither do Protestants. Such a faith is more impotent than that of devils, "who believe and *tremble*." The faith to which Paul ascribes such blessed effects, is the very opposite of that which James condemns, and the very same as that which he approves. It is a faith *with* works,—shown by works,—working by love,—and by works made perfect, as a tree is made perfect by its fruits. The 24th verse must have the same meaning as the 17th, where the proper translation is in the margin—"by itself." The word "only," must be so understood, in order to harmonise with the Apostle's reasoning in regard to Abraham, as well as with the clear, strong, reiterated statements of his brother Paul, whom he could not think of contradicting. Abraham's faith expressed itself in works. He did not merely *say* he had faith—he proved it. To men, the principle of faith in the heart cannot prove a man's justification, any more than a leafless tree in summer can furnish evidence that the root is good. Like the patriarch, we must justify our *profession* of faith, by a life and conversation becoming the Gospel. This is all that James contends for, and Paul goes the full length with him in all his Epistles. May all my readers be enabled to say with him, "We are not of them that draw back to perdition, but of them that *believe to the saving of the soul*." "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but *faith which worketh by love*." "If while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid! I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself

for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: *for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain!*"*

Now compare the doctrine of justification, thus taught us in the New Testament, with the dogma of *satisfaction*—the third part of *Penance*, as laid down in the catechism of the Council of Trent, "perhaps the most authentic summary" of Catholic doctrine.†—"Satisfaction, then, is the full payment of a debt, for when satisfaction is made, nothing remains to be supplied. Hence, when we speak of reconciliation *by grace*, to satisfy is the same as to do that which may be sufficient to *atone* to the angered mind for an injury offered; and thus, satisfaction is nothing more than compensation for an injury done to another. Hence, theologians make use of the word 'satisfaction,' to signify the COMPENSATION *made by man to God*—by doing something in ATONEMENT for the sins which he has committed!"‡ Certainly these theologians did not sit at the feet of Paul! It is true, the atonement of Christ is spoken of as that which "has appeased God and rendered him propitious to us;" but though his is described as "a superabundant satisfaction," yet its chief value in this system seems to be, that "it gives to man's actions *merit before God*." Where did they learn that? In the words of David, when he said, "I will take the cup of salvation, and I will call on the name of the Lord!"§ Because a man *takes* the cup of salvation, and calls on the Lord, therefore his actions have merit before God! This is their only proof! After this infallible method of expounding Scripture, we cannot wonder at the following oracle:—"God we appease by prayer; our neighbour we satisfy by alms; and ourselves we chastise by fasting."§

Scriptural prayer is a privilege, and not a penance. It breathes gratitude for past mercies, or implores forgiveness and grace to help in time of need. How can this *appease*

* Gal. v. 6; iii. 17, 20, 21,

† The late Bishop Doyle. Lord's Committee, March 21, 1825.

‡ p. 285.

§ Psalm cxv. 13.

§ p. 292.

God? Is not the "superabundant satisfaction of Christ" sufficient to atone for our sins? If we *depend* on our prayers for this, do we not lay another foundation—a miserable foundation of straw? The wretch *Francis* fires a pistol at the Queen, and then sends in a petition or prayer for pardon,—and that is a proper satisfaction to public justice! A highwayman demands your purse, and then makes atonement for his crime by asking you to give him "a charity!" Such is the way of salvation according to the Roman catechism.

Again, you slander your neighbour's character, or assault his person, or defraud him of his property. But do not be uneasy! Hear the Church, who tells you that you can "satisfy your neighbour by alms!" You might, indeed, if your neighbours were all *beggars*; but if they are not reduced to that condition, how can you satisfy for the wrong you have done them by giving a pauper a few spare pence, a worthless crust, or some old clothes? Or, if you gave all your goods to feed the poor, what is that to me whom you have defrauded, assaulted, or slandered? Miserable theology! As to fasting, when properly attended to, it humbles the spirit,—pre-disposes to devotion,—and mortifies sinful dispositions. But how can it atone for the deeds done in the body? What warrant has any one for making a saviour of his empty stomach? Such is the patchwork justification which the Puseyite retailers of worn out superstitions would give us, instead of the seamless robe of the Redeemer's righteousness.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CONCLUSION.

“ Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three ; but the greatest of these is charity.” Faith is the bright evidence of things beyond the sky—the persuasion of things not seen. It dissipates the illusions of sense,—resists the cravings of appetite,—disinfects the world’s atmosphere, which would taint the soul ; and realises scenes and joys which belong to a better state. Faith lives on the promises of truth, and patiently awaits their fulfilment. It brings the guilty to the throne of mercy—the vile to the fountain of purity—the miserable to the lap of consolation. It braces the energies of virtue, and kindles the beacon lights of hope amidst a world abandoned to evil, and unmindful of its doom. It speaks encouragement to him who sows in tears,—whose heart feels a wintry chill, while his eye beholds no bud of spring to tell him of the coming life ; and assures him that, in due time, he or his children shall reap, if he faint not. Oh, what should *we* have done, if the faith of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, reformers, had failed ! Had they not heroically contended for the sacred deposit of truth ;—had they not fought the good fight of faith, and fought it triumphantly, how wretched would have been the lot of their posterity ! True that love is greater ; it justly claims the pre-eminence. But, if the church depart from the faith,—if she be removed away from the hope of the Gospel, where would be her love ? Why does the love of many wax cold, but because their faith waxes

feeble? And what worse concerning the condition of society could be said, than that which is intimated in our Lord's interrogatory—"When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find *faith* on the earth?"

In prosperity is not the season when faith gathers her laurels. They are not won amid smiling scenes on the sunny day, when cheering sounds are echoed by every hill, but on blood-stained fields, amid fiery trials and dark calamities,—when all weak and timid spirits retreat in dismay, and leave the soldier of Christ to fight his battles, and the martyr to endure his tortures alone. There are characters in history, that stand out from even the great men of their generation in solitary grandeur, invested with a moral sublimity that thrills the heart with admiration and awe, and causes the precious tears of veneration and sympathy to fill the eye. These were all men of strong faith, who came unstained out of great tribulation, and their memory flourishes on earth as fresh and green as their blood-washed robes in heaven are unsullied and white. It is faith which has marshalled the noble army of martyrs,—that has from age to age borne the banner of the cross untarnished above the fires of persecution. It is faith that produced, and has perpetuated the "cloud of witnesses,"—by whom, those who still struggle on the arena, are encouraged "to quit themselves like men,"—a bright host, composed of men who wrestled for truth and liberty and justice, against principalities and powers in high places,—who defended *the people* against regal and sacerdotal oppressors, in perilous, and almost hopeless times,—the Elijahs and Luthers, who shone on a world that was not worthy of them, from Moses down to Milton. Oh, ye who are buckling on your armour for the warfare of the cross in these times, when the Head of the church expects every man to act his part nobly,—ye ministers of his, who have sworn fidelity at his altar, be roused from "inglorious ease," and contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints!

Nor should the claims of hope pass unregarded. Like lib-

erty, those know its value least who enjoy it most. Ask the man in whose heart the last spark of hope is extinguished, if there is aught in the universe that can give him a moment's delight—that can nerve his arm which hangs down, or strengthen his feeble knees! His bow is broken. The wheels of life are clogged, and he cares not how soon they stop. The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity,—there is an elastic energy in the soul which will bear up against accumulated calamities,—but a wounded spirit who can bear? Hope is that resisting power in the heart, which carries it buoyant through so many sorrows: take it away and what have you left,—a cold, crushed, lifeless thing! If I am still called upon to suffer,—if expectation, which bitter experience has deprived of more than half its youthful ardour, is doomed still to be baffled by disappointment, oh, let the bow of promise ever smile between me and the blackening cloud I dread! Hope can light up, at least, the heaven-ward side of that cloud into a glory, and gild its edges with the tints of immortality!

Truly, she is an angel of mercy, walking through the valley of the shadow of death. Who, without her, could bind up the broken heart—could dry the orphan's tears, and make the widow sing for joy? Whose hand but hers, could turn the bitter cup of adversity into the medicine of the soul—could make even the face of affliction radiant with the smiles of joy, and transform death himself into a welcome visiter; not to a stoic heart, that cares not how soon the scene of sorrow is shut,—but to the sympathising heart of a saint, which, though keenly alive to the blessings that remain, still longs to depart and be with CHRIST, which is far better. To such, death is but the porter that stands at the gate of heaven; and the burden of his song is—"Our light afflictions that continue but a moment, shall work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." "Whosoever hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as Christ is pure."

Faith and hope now abide—and will abide to the end of this

dark, suffering, probationary scene, but no longer. Their proper sphere is in a world of sin, danger, misery, and dependence. They are designed to counteract evils that work only in time, —to arm us against enemies that can have no place in heaven, —to warm the atmosphere around exotic plants, that will need no shelter in their native paradise. This is one reason of the superiority of love. It belongs to a perfect state of existence, and it is because it had not full sway over human hearts, that faith and hope were needed. Perfect love casts out fear, because it casts out sin. Fear is the child of sin, and faith and hope are its great antagonists. When a man is finally saved, he will have nothing to hope for; and when the beatific vision sheds its light on the soul, there will be no room for that which is the substance of things *not seen*.

Thus, when these two graces have done their work, and shall vanish for ever, love will come forth in all the perfection of her beauty,—free from every earthly alloy,—wholly unspotted by the flesh,—undisguised by dissimulation,—unmarred by temper,—unclouded by misunderstanding. Seeing as we are seen, and knowing as we are known, we shall love as we are loved. Hence, it appears, that faith and hope are but means to an end, and that end is love. “Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.” When the dominion of love is fully restored, that salvation is complete. The highest achievement of faith and hope is to keep the flame of love burning bright and pure.

True, we become partakers of the divine nature by faith; but here faith is again but an instrument. The divine nature thus imputed, consists not in faith. God does not *believe*, nor *hope*; but He loves!—“God is love.” It is the communication of *this*, that makes the saint like God. In every way, then, it must be admitted that charity is the greatest. And *how* great, how glorious must she be, when such resplendent virtues,—so mighty, so ennobling, are but her handmaids! *

* It is needless to recommend James on *Christian Charity*. It is many

Some brief remarks on a passage by Peter, bearing on these points will appropriately close this work. The passage alluded to, should be deeply studied by all who take a part in religious controversy. It will suggest an answer to those who object to this department of ministerial duty, and at the same time show what is necessary to its right performance. If I can succeed in bringing out the meaning of this divine passage, I shall describe a perfect Christian controversialist. Alas, how much easier is it to draw the picture, than to present the original!

“And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly-kindness; and to brotherly-kindness, charity.”* Faith is the first link of the chain; and it is fastened to the cross. All the rest depend on this; and besides, there is an admirable connexion among themselves, and a mutual dependence.

Virtue, courage, or fortitude, naturally comes first after faith. As soon as the heart believes unto righteousness, the mouth makes confession unto salvation. The freshly pardoned convert is full of zeal. So far from repressing the fire just kindled within him, he is sometimes over-anxious to display it. He feels so keenly for the honour of his newly-adopted Captain, that he pants for the battle before he is properly drilled for the service. His courage is daring, his zeal is rash, his fortitude is self-willed. Hence the necessity of adding to virtue, *knowledge*;—knowledge of human nature—of society around us—of the characters we would work on—and not least, of ourselves.

The heart of man is a complicated instrument. In touching this “harp of a thousand strings,” what avails a giant’s

years since the author read that work,—but the abiding impression then produced on his mind was—that no finer piece of practical divinity was to be found in the English language; and like all the works of this most useful writer, it is as beautiful in style, as it is improving and impressive in sentiment.

* 2 Peter i. 5—7.

strength without an artist's skill? The rude efforts of a blind and bigoted zeal—of a fierce courage, that provokes hostility and courts martyrdom, can neither honour the Saviour, nor promote his cause. He that would wield the Sword of the Spirit with effect, must be accustomed to the Christian armour. The novice, lifted up with pride, rushes naked into the midst of the battle, and too often returns wounded and disarmed. The word of God, therefore, must be studied deeply and prayerfully. Much of the ill-temper that marks religious controversy, results from ignorance of Scripture, and the intolerance that so often accompanies it. The fire of zeal is strong, but it is wrapped in *smoke* which obscures its brightness. Ardour is good, but it must be guided by knowledge of circumstances,—by a patient study of human nature, and by a judicious consideration of its infirmities and temptations.

Yet knowledge itself requires to be regulated. Learning is not wisdom. It may be vainly paraded, not to convince others, but to glorify ourselves. Inflated with the conceit of our attainments, we may look down contemptuously on meaner capacities, and fancy that we can carry all before us by an ambitious array of strong arguments. Hurried on by a domineering will, and a passion for distinction, we may take up some favourite doctrine which has been attacked, and in the heat of our opposition, run it to the wildest excess. In thus disarranging the whole system of divinity with our monstrous exaggerations, knowledge may be made a snare, and learning the handmaid of error.

Therefore, add to knowledge, *temperance*. Self-controlled and self-possessed;—with the feelings chastened,—the mind stayed on truth, and the heart on God,—meet your opponent in the spirit of candour and meekness. The man who cannot govern himself will not judge without an undue bias, nor reason fairly. He will misconceive and *misrepresent*; and the partial and violent will make no converts.

Courage guided by knowledge, and both under the restraint

of temperance, naturally lead to *patience*. The intemperate and impetuous are never patient; yet without patience, Truth can win few victories. Error is seldom taken by storm; many a time the siege must be long and wearisome before the citadel yields. We must expect to be baffled in our efforts again and again,—to meet many a mortifying rebuff,—to endure coldness, suspicion, aversion,—and not only a total want of sympathy, but malignant misrepresentation from a selfish world,—and to endure all without resentment! Yes, of all men, the avowed and professed antagonist of popular, plausible, but destructive error, has need of patience.

And how can he have it without *godliness*? What is to sustain his spirit amidst depressing trials and unlooked for humiliations,—or to keep it sober amidst high excitements and the applauses that attend success, but the confiding, yet humble and penitent spirit of devotion,—painfully conscious of unworthiness, and ever seeking at the throne of mercy, the strength that is made perfect in weakness.

But a man may be bold in the faith and mighty in the Scriptures,—rigidly abstaining from all self-indulgence, and even from the appearance of evil; he may, moreover, be patient in hope and instant in prayer, and yet lack the very spring of usefulness, as well as of happiness. He may have all these and yet be coldly ascetic, repulsively austere, unsympathising and censorious,—looking on his own things till he fancies there is little else in the universe that can be interesting to the mind of God,—caring for no other man's soul,—neglecting duty to avoid temptation,—and fearing that in proving his brother's keeper, he should become his own destroyer. How rarely do we witness the combination of rigid virtue, and melting kindness! How few of those who “fear not the face of man,” are yet gentle unto all,—like Luther pouring out the feelings of an affectionate nature in private,—and defying the hosts of hell in public;—like Paul, who felt his heart breaking when parting his weeping brethren,—grieved that his face so amiable and at-

tractive, should be seen by them no more, while his determined spirit was prepared for imprisonment or death, at Jerusalem, whither he was hastening ;—or like a greater than Paul, whose tears flowed in the house of mourning, and whose awful sanctity rebuked not the endearments of familiar friendship !

Miserably defective is the christian, whose piety is not softened and animated by brotherly kindness,—who forgets to “do good, and to communicate,”—who forsakes the dusty, rugged path of duty, and shuns the bracing mountain breeze,—the hardships of the camp, and the dangers of the battle, that he may nurse his own sensitive piety in the sickening shade of solitude ! Such a man should abandon the church and go into a monastery.

Let it not be supposed, however, that the love of the brotherhood, is the love of a sect merely. The household of faith is not a denomination. The family of God is not confined to any single tribe ;—and our brotherly kindness should embrace all that Christ has redeemed from darkness and sin, by his Holy Spirit. If we love only *our own*, what do we more than others ? Do not even the publicans the same ? We must add yet another grace—the crowning gift of the Spirit,—the topmost stone of the temple,—the ripest, purest, most heavenly fruit of the tree of holiness :—add to brotherly-kindness, *charity*—universal love—philanthropy,—that all-embracing goodwill which the Father showed infinitely, when He *so* loved a *guilty* world as to give his Son,—which the Son manifested, when he laid down his life for his *enemies* ! This is the love that *so* “cleansed” mankind, *that* nothing is to be called “common,”—that no kindred or colour is to be excluded from our sympathies.* This is the last, most perfect, and most essential of the Christian virtues. It makes us most like Christ.

The story of the good Samaritan is most remarkable. He is exhibited as a model of benevolence. He who drew the touching picture was a Jew,—one of that nation who had no

* Acts x. 15.

dealings with the Samaritans; for between them the most deadly national feuds had been perpetuated from age to age,—and the political antipathy was inflamed by religious bigotry. Yet JESUS represents the orthodox priest of the true church,—the man of broad phylacteries and long prayers, whose almsgiving was proclaimed by a trumpet, and his fasting by a long mournful face,—as shamefully neglecting a most imperative duty to his neighbour, as the result of hardness of heart, and sordid avarice; while the despised, schismatic, profane Samaritan, whose touch was defilement, had compassion on the stranger—bound up his wounds—mollified them with ointment, and lodged the patient kindly at his own expense. “Go thou and do likewise!” What is a religious profession without this? Which of *our* churches or sects would select its model of Christianity, its perfect man, from a rival community, or a hostile nation? Let us guard then against national and sectarian antipathies. They are unchristian; and whether our efforts be to enlighten the Heathen or Mahomedan, the English Protestant or the Irish Roman Catholic, let us take care that our zeal is according to knowledge,—that it is temperate, patient, devout, kind, and above all, that it is embalmed in the spirit of universal charity!

ERRATA.

- Page 24, for “Papistical” read “Patristic.”
 — 62, for “administer” read “administrator.”
 — 96, second paragraph, for “choose” read “chose.”
 — 120, for “It is true” read “It is time.”
 — 192, for “matered” read “mattered.”
 — 199, for “deprivation” read “depravation.”
 — 225, Note, for “Sacans” read “Savans.”
 — 237, for “fruitive” read “furtive.”
 — 277, for “living beings” read “a living being.”
 — 366, for “oblations” read “ablutions.”

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